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HISTORY

OF THE

FOUR CONQUESTS OF ENGLAND.

BY

JAMES AUGUSTUS ST. JOHN.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONQUEST OF ENGLAND BY THE DANES.

Over Ethelred's amatory achievements the Chroniclers have, in many instances, drawn a veil, though not so thick as entirely to conceal their character.[1] He now, in A.D. 1002, conceived the idea of strengthening himself against his enemies by contracting an alliance with a Norman princess.[2] All the steps he had previously taken might have been retrieved—he might have listened to wiser counsellors—superior armies and fleets might have been organised and equipped—the nation might have roused itself from its lethargy, and shaken off the northern incubus; but, by intermarrying with a daughter of the Vikings recently established in France, he enlarged the range of pretensions to the English throne, and prepared the way for the Battle of Hastings. It may doubtless be said for him that he was at his wit's end—no great way to travel. He had alienated the feelings of the English; misfortune had thinned his friends; his own folly had exhausted his resources, and he was to some extent, therefore, excusable in making this desperate attempt to secure to himself a new ally against the Baltic marauders, who every day hemmed

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1002. Chronica de Mailros, I. 153. Ex accessionibus Roberti de Monte ad Sigibertum, Bouquet, X. 269.

him more closely round, and threatened to deprive him at once of crown and life. He could not, moreover, be ignorant that the ranks of the invaders were gradually strengthened by fugitives from his own camp, for during the whole protracted struggle between the Saxons and Danes, thousands of the former—chiefly, perhaps, serfs and slaves—had joined the Vikings against their countrymen.

Richard Sans Peur, who died A.D. 996, had left behind him, by Guenora, a Danish concubine,[1] a daughter, called by popular adulation the Pearl of Normandy.[2] Emma,[3] whom the Saxons denominated Elfgiva, or the Gift of the Elves, seems, in truth, to have been possessed of much beauty; but her mental qualities were very far from corresponding with the charms of her person. Like all other Normans, she was greedy of gold, ambitious, selfish, voluptuous, and in an eminent degree prone to treachery. So far, therefore, she was a fitting mate for Ethelred,[4] who is supposed by some to have proceeded in person to Normandy to bring her home.[5] In the suite of the queen came over numbers of her countrymen, subtle, intriguing, false, and capable of any act of treason which promised to further their own fortunes. These men having been appointed to high commands[6] in various parts of England, allied themselves with the enemy, and commenced that system of fraud and perfidy which in a future reign led to the most calamitous results.

[1] Palgrave, History of Normandy and England, II. 902.

[2] "Emma, Normannorum gemma, venit in Angliam et diadema nomenque reginæ suscepit." Henry of Huntingdon, p. 752. See also Higden Polychronicon, III. 271. Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 122, quaintly observes that "In the xxiv. yere of his regne he wedded Emme, cleped 'The broche of Normandie.'"

[3] Breve Chronicon S. Martini Turonensis, A.D. 996.

[4] The author of L'Estoire de Seint Edward le Rei, VV. 137-142, speaks of Ethelred and Emma as well suited to each other in a different sense:—

"He a wife married, whose name was Emma.
A graceful pair they were;
As sapphire and sparkling gold,
Or the lily and full-blown rose,
Such was the pair and the company."

Mr Luard's translation, p. 183.

[5] Gaimar L'Estoire des Engles, vv. 4126, sqq.

[6] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1003.

Whatever may have been the beauty of Emma, Ethelred's marriage with her was simply an affair of policy, for no sooner was she installed in the palace, than he abandoned her society for that of his English mistresses,[1] with whom he could converse, while in her company he perhaps experienced that tedium and distaste which often characterise intercourse with foreigners. The early days of their nuptials are said to have been clouded by the darkest and most sinister rumours. With whom they originated is unknown. Possibly Emma's Norman friends, always delighting in plots, may have sought to ingratiate themselves at court by industriously circulating or inventing strange and horrible designs, and attributing them to the king's enemies. To add to the exasperation of Ethelred's mind, Huna, his minister and commander-in-chief, burning perhaps with resentment for some personal wrong, is said, in a private audience, to have drawn a fearful picture of the insults and injuries everywhere suffered by the English at the hands of the Northmen, who, enriched by indiscriminate plunder, and naturally petulant and reckless, strutted through the streets of London and other great towns dressed in scarlet or purple, with gilded shields and battle-axes, and helmets inwrought with gold, alluring to their arms such women as were weak and vicious, and offering brutal violence to the noble and the chaste. But however eloquently Huna may have delineated these maddening scenes, the topic was far from possessing novelty. For upwards of two hundred years the soil of England had been stained by similar atrocities, and its women, high and low, had become habituated to the licentious conduct of the invaders. It is, nevertheless, possible that foreign insolence had about this time attained to an unusual height, put on more offensive features, or approached the hearths of men who, through their power or influence in the land, could avenge the degradation of their families.[2]

[1] William of Malmesbury, II.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1012.

Be that as it may, Ethelred, even in the arms of his young wife, devised and executed one of those portentous crimes, which succeeding ages regard with unmitigated horror. To extirpate the Northmen, and clear the whole kingdom of them in one day, the plan of a general massacre was organised. On this occasion, at least, Ethelred and his counsellors displayed great skill, ability, and determination. Though their genius did not enable them to cope with the Northmen in the field, they were at least equal to the task of surprising them by their firesides, or in their beds, and butchering them while incapable of resistance. If the accounts of the Chroniclers be correct, we must admit the whole English nation, or at least all the men in authority, to have participated in the crime of the king. The preparations for the massacre were made at leisure, with abundant contrivance and forethought. Orders were transmitted secretly by letters[1] to every part of the kingdom, that on St. Brice's Day, the thirteenth of November, the Anglo-Saxons should all rise as one man, and utterly exterminate the Danes.[2]

What multitudes of them existed in England, we know not, but their numbers must have been very great, since there was scarcely a town or village in which they did not form a portion of the inhabitants.[3] Some had brought with them their wives from Denmark, others had married into English families, and settled down peaceably in the midst of their new relatives. But these circumstances could by no means extinguish the feelings of resentment and hatred with which the Danes were generally regarded. Scarcely a man, certainly no whole family, could be found in England which had not received some deadly injury at the hands of the invaders. One throb of fierce rapture, therefore, quivered through the whole nation, on the receipt of the fatal instructions

[1] Capgrave, Chronicle of England, edited by the Rev. Francis Charles Hingeston, p. 122.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1002.

[3] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 880.

from London. Suddenly, in the midst of complete tranquillity, the Anglo-Saxons rose against their guests, against their dearest friends, against their brothers-in-law, and their sisters-in-law, and plunged the avenging steel into their hearts, not even sparing infants at the breast, whose brains, together with those of their mothers, were dashed out against the posts of their doors.[1] In some cases, those Englishwomen who had become the mistresses of Danes were buried alive in the earth, or had their breasts cut off, and were thus left to perish.[2] The slaughter was equally vast and hideous. Well might the Chroniclers be ashamed to dwell on the features of the nation's barbarity, and seek to palliate its hideousness by extending one short general description over it like a pall. But impartial history must neither dissemble nor extenuate crimes. We know that the Danes themselves, in their attempt to subdue this country, were guilty of the most detestable cruelty, slaughtering habitually the aged and the infant, the nun at the altar, the mother at the cradle-side.

By the massacre of St. Brice's Day, the English reduced themselves to a level with the Danes. Their ferocity was equal, and enacted on a much larger stage. The Vikings had perpetrated their enormities, here and there, at wide intervals, in towns, in villages, or in convents, but the revenge taken upon them extended through the territories of a whole kingdom, and that, too, after habits of intimacy, of friendship, and even of love, had begun to unite the two races. For the authors of this crime, no apology can be offered; but a majority of the inferior agents may have been stimulated and overreached by a belief, briefly spoken of in the Saxon Chronicle, that the Northmen were about to rise upon them, perpetrate an universal butchery, and then seize upon the entire realm.[3] It is said that this conspiracy

[1] Roger of Wendover, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1012.

[2] Chronica Johannis Wallingford, III. 547.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1002.

of the Danes had been revealed to Ethelred. But the report rests upon no evidence,[1] and the hurried, obscure, guilty way, in which the hideous crime is alluded to, sufficiently proves that the Chroniclers had no real extenuation to offer, and that the conspiracy was a mere fable.

Gunhilda,[2] the sister of Sweyn, after having beheld her children and her husband—the traitor Palig—killed before her eyes,[3] was herself led forth to execution in the streets of London. Familiar with her brother's character and policy, she predicted, as they were about to shed her blood, that her death would be speedily and fearfully avenged.

As the population of East Anglia, Northumbria, and the Five Burghs of Mercia, was almost exclusively Danish, we cannot attribute to the humanity of Ethelred its exclusion from the massacre. All that could be reached by the pike or the dagger were slain. Neither the horrors of St. Bartholomew, nor the Sicilian Vespers, could exceed the enormity of St. Brice's Day. The only explanation of it that can be given, is to be found in the facts of the Danish invasion, already stated. It was a sanguinary reaction, the turning of the tiger upon its hunters. The extent of its criminality is not to be estimated; but the deed lived in the memory of the Northmen wherever they might be found, and was cherished especially by the Danes in France, who, though separated from their kindred on the Baltic by a hundred and forty years' residence in a foreign land, had their vindictive passions stimulated at Hastings by an artful and exasperating reference to the bloody achievements of Ethelred.

While the slaughter was taking place in London,

[1] William of Malmesbury speaks of it as a light suspicion, II. 10.

[2] Considering the evil reputation which attached to the name of Gunhilda, ever since the time of Eric Bloodaxe's queen, it is surprising that it should have continued to be so great a favourite as it was among the northern nations. See a highly interesting account of the ancient Gunhilda, and her magic studies, in Dr. Dasent's Appendix to the Njals Saga, II. 377, 396.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

twelve young Danes rushed, it is said, to the banks of the Thames, and throwing themselves into a boat, rowed with all their might down the river. After lurking about the shore for some time, they found a ship bound for Denmark, on board of which they returned home, where they related to the fierce and vindictive Sweyn all they knew of the massacre of their countrymen, dwelling so emphatically on the circumstances which attended the death of his sister Gunhilda,[1] that their narrative wrung tears, it is said, even from the iron nature of Forkbeard. We must not, however, attribute either to affection or vengeance the policy which immediately after the massacre of the Danes in England, was pursued by Sweyn. From the moment of his accession to the throne of Denmark, effected through the murder of his father by Palnatóke, but more especially after the defeat and death of Olaf Trygvesson, he had evidently resolved upon the conquest of England, and in order, as far as possible, to ensure success, had taken precisely those measures which Robert the Devil's bastard afterwards adopted as his models. Dexterously availing himself of the indignation excited throughout Denmark by the murder of the princess Gunhilda, together with that of so many gallant and noble Danes,[2] he assembled the chiefs of his kingdom, and in a strain of eloquence worthy of himself and his race, explained to them that nothing could atone for so hideous an aggregate of crime as had been perpetrated in England against their countrymen but the complete conquest of the island. They were urged, therefore, to make immediately the most strenuous exertions in their several governments and provinces, while he himself appealed to all the chivalry of the North to aid him in chastising the wickedness of a nation which, by the depth of its criminality, appeared to have outraged the whole human race.

[1] Chronica Johannis Wallingford, III. 547. Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1012.

[2] Higden Polychronicon, III. 271.

In a state of society such as that which prevailed in the North of Europe in the eleventh century, when piracy and war constituted the chief employment of gentlemen, the invitation to engage in an enterprise promising much gain and glory was not to be resisted;[1] adventurers, therefore, from Iceland, from Norway, and from all the neighbouring regions, eagerly enrolled themselves in the ranks of the Danish army. What manner of men they were may be gathered from the traditions of the North, in which they are represented cool, ruthless, unsparing as the Red Indians of other days, habitually prowling about with arms in their hands, always athirst for vengeance, eager to shed blood, and, like the savages of Borneo, addicted to cutting off and bearing about with them the heads of their enemies as trophies of their prowess. Even the missionaries of the mildest and gentlest of all religions propagated their faith in Iceland by assassination and massacre. Earl Thangbrand,[2] the apostle of the island, always went armed with sword or spear, ready to transfix his opponents. Scarcely a family in the country, and probably very few individuals, could be found who were not stained with the blood of some neighbour and entangled in the meshes of hereditary feuds, which converted murder into a duty. Throughout the land, at dawn or eve, assassins might be seen behind walls, in thickets and copses, on the rocky banks of rivers, lying in wait for the objects of their ferocious revenge; and in the law courts, accordingly, the chief business transacted had reference to the making up of quarrels, arresting the course of blood feuds, or fixing the amount of pecuniary atonement for murder. Such were the brutalising effects of this system of manners, that women, instead of exerting their influence to humanise their companions, may be said as a rule to have stimulated

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1012.

[2] Dr. Dasent, Njal Saga, I. XCII, 68.

their bloodthirstiness, and goaded them into crime, sometimes by taunting those who appeared slow or unwilling to take revenge, sometimes by taking the garment in which their husbands had been murdered, folding it up carefully so as to preserve the clotted blood, and then on the visit of some male relation, on whom the duty of slaughter seemed to have devolved, bringing it forth from the coffer and flinging it over him, to awaken his criminal appetite by the sight and smell of his relative's gore. What treatment the Anglo-Saxons had to expect from such invaders may be readily divined. Mercy was an attribute totally foreign to their natures; what they sought in their expeditions against our island was good store of Anglo-Saxon silver, which they acquired by all conceivable deeds of violence and villany, and, when their work was accomplished, scattered in vast profusion over all the regions of the North.[1]

As no king had ever more need than Ethelred of money, so among all the princes who reigned in England no one possessed so many mints,[2] or passed laws so severe to protect the royal privilege of coining from being invaded by illicit moneyers.[3] To estimate the amount of civilisation in a country, there is no surer means than interrogating its laws. If these be based on humane principles, if in their spirit you discern a preference of life before property, of right before power, the protection of the poor and the needy before the convenience of the great, you may bestow on the possessors of such a code the praise of being civilised; but if, on the contrary, the authors of the laws chiefly make reference in their work to the rights and privileges of power and opulence, we must inevitably include such a state in the vast circle of barbarism. To put false money into circulation is in-

[1] "The quantity of Anglo-Saxon coins found all over the North shows that they must have passed current everywhere," Dasent, Njals Saga, II. 400.

[2] Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 367.

[3] Laws of King Ethelred, § III. art. 8.

disputably an offence against civil society, but to visit such an offence with death is to exercise the wild authority of a brigand who understands nothing of the proportions between crime and punishment. The old privilege[1] of all Anglo-Saxons of high rank—earls, archbishops,[2] bishops, and abbots—to possess mints and issue coin of their own, had already been abrogated as early as the days of Athelstan, who caused to be enacted a law prohibiting any but the king from establishing a mint. Considering the influence of immemorial custom, we can experience little surprise that many among the Saxons should refuse to recognise the justice of such a law. It needed much time and systematic indoctrinating to persuade the English nation that a privilege enjoyed from the earliest ages by all noblemen, eminent churchmen, and municipal bodies, could with justice be annihilated by a single act of the Witenagemót. Besides, in the circumstances of the times, in which confusion and anarchy overspread the whole land, there existed the strongest temptation to make the most of what little silver or any other metal a man might possess. Even the regular moneyers, or mint-masters, seem often to have struck false coin, for which, when accused, if they failed to clear themselves by the threefold ordeal, they were put to death. Desperate bands of coiners, the relics, possibly, of the ancient general system of money-making, repaired in many instances by night to the forests,[3] and in their deep and distant recesses fabricated that profusion of spurious money which seems to have inundated the land, and excited the vindictiveness of the legislature.

At first the Anglo-Saxons possessed no coins of their

[1] In the opinion of Selden, every lord of a city not only exercised the privilege of coining, but also stamped the money with either his name or his effigies. Ruding (Annals of the Coinage, I. 346) refers to Selden's notes on Eadmer, p. 217.

[2] At the sale of Mr. Sheppard's, of Frome, collection, a penny of Ceolnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 830-870 (Chronologia Augustinensis, pp. 14, 17), sold for £13 10*s.*, which indicates the rarity of these archiepiscopal coins.—*Athenæum*, January 26th, 1861.

[3] Laws of King Ethelred, § iii. art. 16.

own, but made use indiscriminately of such money as had been put in circulation by the Britons or Romans, who seem to have established mints in every considerable city and town in England. Of British money, large quantities, both in gold and silver, were struck before the Claudian conquest, which appear to have continued in circulation after the Romans had become masters of the island, for the edict ordaining that all current money should bear the imperial stamp, may be regarded as imaginary.[1] As under the later Anglo-Saxon kings, the gold Byzant was allowed to circulate, so it may be concluded that in very early times, as well under the Romans as Saxons, foreign gold coins of different nations were commonly in use. In corroboration of this view, it may be remarked that hoards of ancient money have from time to time been dug up in various parts of the kingdom, and recently two Greek gold coins were discovered in Kent, one under the roots of a very old tree.[2] It has been inferred that when the chiefs of the Heptarchy began to strike money of their own, their mints were regulated by laws brought with them from the Continent,[3] but it is far more probable that they adopted both the practice and the rules which they found already established in the country. The first Anglo-Saxon mint seems to have been set up in Kent, where scættæ were coined as early as the sixth century, and before the conversion of the natives to Christianity.[4] From that time forwards all the

[1] Ruding (Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 272) refers to Gildas, whose authority on such matters is altogether worthless. Cunobelin's coins, of which there exist more than forty varieties, must surely have formed part of the circulating medium from the profusion in which they are found scattered all over England. See Wright, Celt, Roman and Saxon, second edition, pp. 82, sqq.

[2] *Athenæum*, February 2nd, 1861. Ruding, after discussing the similarity observable in the nummulary terms of the Greeks and Saxons, rejects the notion that the latter borrowed from the former, and boldly sends our ancestors to Egypt in search of numismatic lore, I. 279.

[3] Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 274.

[4] See Ruding, Annals, &c., 4to volume, plate iii. Examples of these scættæ have been found in pagan Anglo-Saxon barrows or graves. Wright, Celt, Roman and Saxon, p. 437

petty princes and chiefs who carved out for themselves dominions in this country, impressed more or less rudely their effigies on the money circulated in their territories, but with the exception of the Mercian Offa, nothing like artistic skill or taste is discernible in the production of their mints; and to account for the superior beauty and elegance of this prince's coins, he is supposed to have brought back with him Italian artists from Rome,[1] to preside over the labours of his moneyers. This ingenious conjecture, however, loses much of its probability when it is considered that Offa's Roman pilgrimage is a fiction, for which reason some other explanation of the superiority of his coins must be sought, and may perhaps be found in the greatness of his own genius, and the much higher state of civilisation which Mercia seems to have inherited from the great Roman municipalities with which it was thickly studded.

The history of the Anglo-Saxon mints, equally curious and imperfect, may be said to show that, in times of great public calamity, like those of Alfred and Burhred, the coinage was much debased. In no part of the country, except Northumbria, do we find brass money, or, save in rare instances, any other metal than silver; but in the period between the departure of the Romans and the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon principalities, an abundance of brass money, supposed to have been struck by the municipal towns, was in general circulation. Immediately upon the Danish conquest, the effigies of the foreign sovereigns, the violent precursors of the Normans appear upon the coins of England—Sweyn,[2] Canute, and their successors, whose truculent physignomies must

[1] Ruding (Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 323) adopts with some hesitation the legend of Offa's pilgrimage, and refers to Carte, History of England, I. 273. But this writer has no authority but the fabulous life of Offa, by Matthew Paris, who imagined he was writing the life of an English king, while really composing the legend of a mythical Anglian prince. See Kemble, Preface to Beowulf, I. xiv.

[2] See Bircherod, Specimen Antiquæ rei Moneteriæ Danorum, p. 39, quoted by Ruding.

lers for the purchase of peace.[1] The money was accepted, and the truce agreed on; but before its expiration, Sweyn threw himself, with his whole force, into Thetford, which he sacked, and set on fire.[2] The brave Earl, perceiving that no faith was to be put in treaties with the Danes, proclaimed a general levy throughout East Anglia, and prepared for battle. His policy was vigorous and enlightened. To one part of his forces he issued orders to burn the Danish fleet, which was leisurely moving up the coast for the protection of the army; with the remainder, he resolved to encounter Sweyn, in the hope of entirely cutting him off.

But his policy was defeated by the tardiness or timidity of the East Anglians. His orders to destroy the ships were disobeyed, and only a small portion of the people rallied round him for battle. With these, however, he attacked the Danes with all a Dane's fierceness and bravery—for he too belonged to the Scandinavian race—and so fiery was his impetuosity, and so well was he seconded by the small force at his command, that, by the confession of the invaders themselves, they never engaged in a more sanguinary conflict on English ground. Many of the East Anglian nobles fell in this battle, which might have proved fatal to Sweyn and his whole army had the rising against them been general. As it was, he fought his way with much difficulty to his ships.

This casual advantage exerted little influence on the general aspect of the war, which, during the following year, was interrupted by the results of its own ravages. No calamity, incident to human society, had England escaped. The appearance of comets, and the occurrence of earthquakes, had filled the nation with superstitious terrors; plagues had attacked the people, with their flocks and herds; and now, in A.D. 1005, famine came to complete the destruction begun by pestilence and the sword.[3] In the midst of these horrors, of which the

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1004.
[2] Chronica de Mailros, I. 153.
[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1004.

hourly have reminded the Saxons, through their co
mercial dealings, that they were a subjugated and infer
people.[1]

In the year A.D. 1003, Sweyn, having drawn togeth
an army from most parts of Europe, appeared with
powerful fleet off the coast of Devonshire, and this ti
with something like a show of justice. Sailing up t
Exe, he was about to lay siege to Exeter, when Hugo
the governor, one of Emma's creatures, unterrified b
the events of St. Brice's Day, threw open the gates t
the Danish host. Having wreaked ample vengeance o
the inhabitants, collected immense booty, and ruined the
city wall, the Vikings marched inland, and encamped
in Wiltshire. It would be nauseous to repeat the
stories of perfidy by which the Chroniclers attempt to
extenuate the cowardice of the Saxons. Elfric, they
pretend, whose son's eyes had been put out, and who
before had repeatedly betrayed the cause of his country,
was again placed by Ethelred at the head of the English
army sent to dispute with Sweyn the road to the capital.
Just on the eve of battle, he feigned, we are told, to be
seized with sudden sickness,[3] upon which the soldiers,
though eager to engage the enemy, reluctantly turned
their backs, and fled. Upon this, Sweyn pursued his
march, sacked and burned Wilton[4] and Salisbury, after
which he approached that part of the shore where he
knew that his sea-horses awaited him. Mounted on
these trusty steeds, the Vikings turned their faces east-
wards, and landed, A.D. 1004, at Norwich,[5] and having
plundered and burned the city, advanced into the
interior, diffusing terror far and wide. To stay their
ravages, Ulfkytel, earl of East Anglia, suddenly calling
together his Witan, consulted with them, and it was
agreed that a sum of money should be offered to the in-

[1] Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 376, sqq.
[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1003.
[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1003.
[4] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 271
[5] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1004.

formed the crowning incident, the
ere ifestly blending, partly by force,
ough policy. Ethelred himself had been
ith a Danish woman, who brought him many
; and his second wife was also, in part at least,
inavian. Most of his offspring, therefore, were
nes, and these again allied themselves, both
nd females, with the Baltic stock. No reasons
y or prejudice prevented his distributing his
rs among his earls: Ulfkytel had one, Edric
, and as long as his family survived they con-
o marry and intermarry with individuals from
th. The surface of events was, therefore, ob-
sloping towards the catastrophe of Hastings.
ttle pure Saxon blood remained in the country.
ence or persuasion, by interest, by considerations
diency, by accident frequently, and at times by
he Saxon women had become the mothers of
n to Danes. The king's marriage with Emma
uted in no slight degree to multiply the elements
usion and dissolve the links of patriotism. Ad-
ers from Normandy stealthily crept into the land,
h the pardonable partiality of Emma, and the
al connivance of her husband. All these new comers
nti-Saxon leanings, and by birth, education, and
prejudices were led to co-operate with the
rather than the invaded. During all the suc-
reigns the same process was continued, and
on a larger and larger scale. By degrees the
face of the country became studded with Northern
bishops, abbots, monks, priests, and inferior
s, so that to transfer the sceptre from one family
e to another demanded no extraordinary effort,
volved no marvellous revolution.

desolation of war can by no means be regarded
only cause of the famine which afflicted England
05. There must have been the co-operation of
l phenomena, floods, droughts, murrain, mildew;

for the devastations had long conti
wards renewed on a still more ex sive s
producing similar results. From whatever fo
bitter waters flowed, they covered the who
Everywhere the famishing multitude preser
grim spectacle of suffering; and, therefore, u
victual his followers, Sweyn sailed back to D
but, after a brief delay, having recruited his f
the Baltic, returned with an immense fleet, and
shortly after Midsummer at Sandwich. No new
characterised the military operations that ensued
ing with little opposition, they marched inland,
up their war-beacons as they went, in othe
committing towns and cities to the flames. N
county in all Wessex escaped the ravages of the
An army, indeed, was collected to check their p
which continued in the field all harvest-time, bu
out once coming to an engagement. The me
dispersed and retired to their homes, leaving th
undisputed masters of the country wherever t
vanced. A prophecy had got into circulation,
these invaders ever ventured to encamp on Cuck
Hill,[1] they would never again be able to reach t
To evince their contempt for the silly superstit
the natives, the Danes, after having set all Be
and Oxfordshire in a blaze, proudly pitched th
on the fatal height, despising equally the predict
its authors, and when they had at their leisure su
from this eminence the lovely country they had r
should one day be their own, they descende
sweeping before them their vast booty, rich vest
chalices from the altar, gold and silver ornaments
droves of cattle, and troops of female captives—re
towards the sea-shore. During their march, a sma
of Saxons, drawn together in haste, encountered

[1] Camden, Britannia, p. 151.

at Kennet,[1] but was soon put to flight; after which they pushed forward leisurely, apprehending no further interruption. Their route lay near the city of Winchester, and the faithful Chronicler observes:—"Then might the Winchester men see a brave and fearless army pass by their gates, and collect for its use food and treasure through a circuit of fifty miles."[2]

Ethelred, with his favourite Edric Streone,[3] to whom he had given his daughter Editha in marriage,[4] had meanwhile retired into Shropshire,[5] where his evil destiny betrayed him into the commission of fresh crimes. It seems wholly impossible to penetrate the secret of Ethelred's character. When it was most needful for him to conciliate the affections and goodwill of his people, his everyday acts only tended to alienate them more completely from him. Deeds of violence characterised the manners of the times—one of his ablest generals, having slain in private strife a court favourite, was banished the realm, and now Ethelred indulged his vindictiveness and cupidity against other distinguished persons. To lessen the odium inspired by his crimes, they are in part attributed by the Chroniclers to the instigation of Edric: but what a king does by his instruments, he does himself. We are wholly deprived, therefore, of all pretence for attempting the exculpation of Ethelred, who slew, blinded, or sent into exile, the best and ablest men of England.[6] The steps by which his new favourite rose to influence in the palace, and to distinction and power in the state, have not been carefully marked by the Chroniclers. He is said to have been a man of low origin,[7] but gifted by nature with great abilities, a plausible tongue, and most

[1] The Cunetio of Antoninus, situated on the river of the same name. Camden, Britannia, p. 98.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1006.

[3] Historia Ingulphi, I. 57.

[4] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1009, with the note of Mr. Petrie. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1007.

[5] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 272.

[6] "The same year was Wulfgeat deprived of all his possessions, and Wulfeah and Ufgeat were blinded, and Elfelm, the ealdorman, was slain." Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1006.

[7] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 272. William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

persuasive eloquence. Despised and shrunk from by the nobility on account of his humble birth, he perceived that his sole prospect of advancement lay through the king's favour, which was only to be secured by divining and executing his worst wishes. Men in such a situation often become perfidious and sanguinary. Constrained to submit to numerous insults, even from their patron, they treasure up the remembrance of them in their hearts, and are half suffocated by their pent-up feelings till the moment of vengeance presents itself.

We find Edric Streone in a situation of great opulence and authority in Shropshire, where his first achievement is an act of assassination. His residence was at that time in the city of Shrewsbury, whither he invited Elfhelm, earl of Mercia or Deira[1], whose estates and honours he coveted, to a great entertainment, which, after the manner of the Anglo-Saxons, lasted many days. All the amusements of the age were called in to enliven the guests, especially hunting, always a favourite sport with Teutonic nations. The hunt naturally led the sportsmen into a forest, where Edric had made all necessary arrangements for the assassination of his guest. It is clearly implied by the appellation of the murderer, that he was habitually employed in deeds of blood, for he was called Godwin, the "City Hound."[2]

This miscreant, at the head of a band of ruffians bribed with gifts and profuse promises by Edric, seized dexterously upon the moment when the great earl was passing through a dusky part of the wood, rushed suddenly from his hiding-place, and assassinated him. The

[1] There is no certainty respecting the province of which Elfhelm was earl. From the fact that, almost immediately after his murder, Edric succeeded to the earldom of Mercia, it may perhaps be inferred that he slew him in order to obtain his honours, though Dr. Lappenberg is of opinion that he was earl of Deira, and refers to Gale, I. 522, probably a typographical error for III. 5, Historia Eliensis, where the signature of Elfhelmus Dux occurs in a charter. See also Codex Diplomaticus, VI. 153.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A. 1006. "Carnifex Godwinus Cognomento, id est, oppidi canis."

this crime was committed in conformity with the king's wishes can hardly admit of a doubt, for the terror it inspired throughout Mercia had not yet died away ere the two sons of Elfhelm, Wulfeah and Ulfgeat, had their eyes torn out by royal command.[1] It had always formed a part of Ethelred's domestic policy to assail the great men of his kingdom with false accusations, that he might have a pretext for taking at once their lives and their estates. What proportion of the advantages springing from the murder and the blinding fell to his share, the historians of the time have omitted to state; but Edric Streone, his instrument or accomplice, rose greatly in the path of ambition, for he shortly after received as his reward the extensive and opulent earldom of Mercia.[2]

Meanwhile no effectual steps were taken to circumscribe the ravages of the enemy. All England lay before them trembling, not knowing in what direction the torrent of plunder, massacre, and violation would be next poured.[3] Their predecessors of the ninth century had conducted the same process of devastation over the surface of France, where, with comparatively small forces, they reduced the whole population of the land to depend for life upon their mercy. A few hundred Normans entered the largest cities, and carried away whatever they set their hearts on. Most of the ancient noble families had disappeared, and the nation, subjugated and corrupted by ecclesiastical influence, had degenerated into a rabble of tame and submissive slaves. All public affairs were in the hands of bishops and monks, who, profiting by the general calamity, enlarged the circle of saint and relic worship, which every day became more prolific

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1006.

[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 10. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1007.

[3] The language of the National Chronicle in describing the feelings which then universally prevailed is equally strong and emphatic: "Then became the dread of the army so great that no man could think or discover how they could be driven out of the land, or this land maintained against them, for they had every shire in Wessex easily marked by harrying and by plundering." A.D. 1006.

source of opulence to the Church. The same causes had now produced the same effects in England, where the worshippers of Odin drove before them like a flock of sheep vast multitudes of those whom the superstitions of Rome had altogether deprived of manly virtue.[1] In this dismal predicament, the king and his Witan reverting to the grovelling policy of substituting gold for steel, paid for a brief and precarious truce thirty-six thousand pounds of silver.[2] The expedient, it is said, was hateful to them; but possessing neither courage nor military skill, it was their only resource. They furthermore agreed to supply the invaders with provisions, for which the whole country was ransacked by the government collectors. To what depths of misery the people were reduced by these measures, it surpasses our power to conjecture. One day their scanty stores were swept away by the Danes, on the next Ethelred's tax-gatherers made their appearance, and showed little more mercy than the common foe. The contest had assumed the character of a civil war, and Sweyn was looked upon rather as Ethelred's rival for the crown than as a foreign marauder. From viewing him in this light, thousands fell away[3] from the unworthy descendant of Alfred, to cleave to the adventurous Viking, who, whatever might be the fierceness or ferocity of his mind, at least possessed the redeeming virtue of courage.

Trial only in desperate times can ascertain the measure of a nation's resources. To prevent the army of Northmen already in England from receiving perpetual reinforcements by sea, it was decreed by the Witenagemót

[1] See Hallam's able note on the cowardice of the French in the ninth century. Middle Ages, I. 134.

[2] Higden (Polychronicon, III. 272) reduces the sum to thirty thousand pounds of silver. Capgrave (Chronicle of England, p. 122) thus quaintly sums up the history of the Danish tribute:—"He was so acomered with Danes that he be the counceloftheBischopofCaunterbury he accorded with them to pay hem yerly X thousand pound, and the second yere XVI thousand; and so thei reised him to XL thousand."

[3] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 880.

that a vast fleet should be constructed and equipped[1] with all speed.[2] To accomplish this, the payment of the Danegeld was rigorously enforced. Every three hundred and ten hides of land were required to supply a ship fully manned and armed, and every eight hides a helmet and coat of mail. Upwards of a year was consumed in making ready this armament, which far exceeded in magnitude all the maritime efforts of preceding kings. Unhappily physical means are of little avail where wisdom and courage are wanting. About the vicious and bewildered king, the earl of Mercia and his brethren clung like the fabled serpents about Laocoon. They were seven in all—Edric, Brihtric, Elfric, Goda, Ethelwine, Ethelward, and Ethelmere—and between them was incessantly carried on a reckless struggle for pre-eminence. Being all desirous of monopolising the favour of Ethelred, they plotted against each other, and pursued their designs with relentless vindictiveness.

Ethelmere, the youngest of the brothers, had a son, Wulfnoth,[3] who for his courage and capacity had been made Childe of the South Saxons, a post of great honour and distinction. This excited rancorous envy in the breast of his uncle Brihtric, who, in order to compass his overthrow, accused him of treason to the king.[4] Familiar with the cruel and capricious temper of Ethelred, the young earl effected his escape from London, and, throwing himself on board the fleet, persuaded the seamen of twenty ships to follow his fortunes, and become Vikings on the ocean. Imitating the Northmen, whose calling they had adopted, they plundered and devastated the whole southern coast of England as if it had been the territory of their worst enemy. Brihtric now persuaded himself that the favourable moment had

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1008. For the number of hides in England see Gale, III. 748; and for the extent of the hide, Kemble, Saxons in England, Appendix to vol. I. p. 487. Sir Henry Ellis, Introduction to Doomsday, I. 145, sqq.

[2] Chronica de Mailros, I. 154.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1009.

[4] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1008.

arrived for at once satiating his revenge and rising to higher honour at court. He requested and obtained the command of a large squadron, with which he set out eagerly in pursuit of his nephew; but not being familiar with the sea, or with the signs of bad weather he suffered himself to be overtaken by a storm, which wrecked most of his ships upon the beach. These the Childe of the South Saxons, coming up with his little squadron as soon as the tempest had subsided, set on fire and utterly destroyed, and having by this act placed an impassable barrier between himself and the king's favour, sailed merrily away to lead the life of a pirate on the sea.[1]

The great body of the fleet, however, was still s under the command of Ethelred himself; but valiant prince, taking fright at the disaster which overtaken Brihtric's squadron, relinquished the mand and fled on shore. The example thus se immediately followed by the rest of the admirals through fear apparently of Wulfnoth, hastily e the Thames and returned to London. Thus the expense of this immense armament was thrown since the only result obtained by its construction the farther impoverishment of the nation.[2]

No sooner had the sea been cleared, than a Danish fleet appeared off the coast, and, meeting with opposition, entered the harbour of Sandwich.[3] Here th freebooters refreshed themselves, and then sailed f Canterbury, which they would at once have stormed a sacked, but that the citizens consented to ransom then selves, by the payment of three thousand pounds.[4] has been suspected, perhaps without reason, that t movements of Thurkill were directed by Sweyn,[5] wh

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1008.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1009.
[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1009.
[4] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 272.
Simeon De Gestis Regum Angloru p. 167.
[5] William of Malmesbury mak Thurkill invite Sweyn to undertak the conquest of England, by givi

hough ostensibly observing the stipulations of his treaty vith Ethelred, contrived in this way to neutralise them. Whatever construction we put upon his conduct, Thurkill pursued the hereditary system of his countrymen. roceeding to the Isle of Wight, and making that his ead-quarters, he disembarked his forces in Hampshire, nd extended his depredations throughout the whole of hat county, together with Berkshire and Sussex. Another ppeal was now made by Ethelred to the nation, which onsented, though with evident reluctance, to take the ld against the new enemy. No advantage, however, was tained by this hasty rush to arms. Possessed by overhelming terror of the Danes, they marched hither and her, showing themselves where the enemy were not, skilfully eluding coming face to face with them. one occasion, when they were thrown accidentally een Thurkill and the sea, and, in the opinion of the niclers, might have easily cut him off, nothing was ught of but flight, the disgrace and infamy of which set down, though with obvious injustice, to the acnt of Edric Streone. Had the army been really brave, would have found a general; but commanders and ldiers were equally without valour, and only sought to reen themselves from censure by mutual accusations of achery.

Encountering no effectual resistance, Thurkill again lvanced eastwards, and occupied Kent, subsisting by the under of that ancient kingdom, and the neighbouring unty of Essex. Imagining everything to be possible ainst so pusillanimous a foe, he frequently pushed forard his army to the walls of London, which he attempted storm. But the citizens of that great city had lost thing of their hereditary courage, and invariably opsed to the assailants so vigorous a resistance that they

im an account of the king's vices, the people's sloth, and the untry's fertility (II. 10). But as Forkbeard knew England much better than Thurkill, this story is obviously without foundation.

at length relinquished the enterprise, and remained ti
mid-winter cooped up in their camp.[1]

The operations of the Northmen now ceased to resembl
war; the whole country lay helpless before them, an
with the exception of the capital, scarcely any city escap
the calamity of storm and plunder. The accounts tran
mitted to us, however, can hardly fail to excite o
scepticism, since we find the same counties repeatedl
ravaged, and yet always yielding an abundance of plunde
and the same cities burned again and again. Almost th
only feature possessing any novelty is the battle of Rin
mere,[2] in which Ulfkytel, at the head of the East Anglia
encountered the host of Thurkill, as he had previous
that of Sweyn. The fruitlessness of prolonging the st
gle was made evident at Ringmere. A majority of
combatants on both sides were Danes, or the descend
of Danes, and if they fought, it was only, on one si
preserve what they had acquired, on the other, to
an establishment in the country and share the soil w
the previous settlers. But an interval of peaceful poss
sion, however short, seems to have unfitted the Dan
as it had unfitted the Anglo-Saxons, for hand to ha
battles with the ferocious Vikings, who knew they h
no alternative but victory or death by hunger. Befo
these half-famished freebooters, the East Anglians, f
lowing their leader, Thurkytel Mareshead,[3] soon ga
way, while the blue-eyed Vandals of Cambridgeshi
preferring death to defeat, continued the struggle un
they were either cut to pieces or overwhelmed by nu
bers. In this battle fell Athelstan, one of the kin
sons-in-law, together with many other nobles; aft
which Thurkill remained, during three months, mast
of East Anglia.

By what means the conquest of the country w

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1009.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 167. Chronica de Mailros, I. 154.

[3] Myren-Heafod, Florence Worcester, A.D. 1010.

layed, seems difficult of explanation. The spirit of the ople was all but completely broken. Dissension, dis-ust, effeminacy, selfishness, pervaded the whole popula-n, narrowing the views and paralysing the energies of that remained of the ancient Saxon aristocracy. As the worst days of the Heptarchy, no traces were visible a national policy; county refused to aid county, and anes and earls, intent on preserving their own estates, andoned all care of the public weal. When armies, refore, were raised, the only effect was still further to overish the country, since they never showed them-ves to the enemy, but carefully directed their march ough those counties which were farthest removed from avages.[1]

nsidering the characters of the king and his coun-, no surprise can be expressed at their having se, in such an emergency, to their old device of ng the foe with fresh resources; but the ability people to find the means cannot fail to excite our ment. Devastated, depopulated, and pillaged as is said to have been, it now, in the thirty-first ie war, was sufficiently wealthy to pour as tribute tne coffers of the spoilers, forty-eight thousand pounds ver.[2] Over the amount of tribute, however, Ethel-and his witless Witan had no control. The Danes le their demands, and as the Saxons would not fight, as clear they must comply with the wishes of their ters. They had probably ceased to expect anything ond a short respite, in consideration of this immense ation. Barbarians have seldom much respect for th, and regard the keeping of faith as an act of weak-s. To outwit their enemies by oaths and treaties is honourable, in their opinion, as to subdue them in the

[1] Relating the events of this amitous period, the Saxon ronicle observes, "Wherever the nes were, there the English were ." A.D. 1010.

[2] The following are the sad words of the national Chronicle: "Nevertheless, for all the truce and tribute, they went everywhere in bands, and plundered our miserable people, and robbed and slew them," A.D. 1011. Historia Ingulphi, I. 57.

field. Accordingly, the Danes agreed to everything quired of them by Ethelred, and, having obtained t money, took no further notice of the incident, than in far as it augmented their supplies.

About the middle of September, Thurkill, at the he of his army, once more entered Kent, and, being resolved add the name of its ancient capital to the list of cities he h already ruined, encamped before Canterbury,[1] and con menced the siege by surrounding it with a deep trench The defence of the place, with its splendid cathe al, rich and spacious monasteries, its palaces and regal nish m and active and opulent population, devolved o land bishop Elphege.[3] This man, formerly abbot of of t gustine's, had, during the Benedictine contest, be pointed to the see of Winchester by Dunstan, from w in A.D. 1005, he had been raised to the primacy.[4] tinguished for courage and resolution, and honour all ranks for his virtues and the extraordinary muni of his charity, he would probably have baffled th and worn out the patience of the besiegers, bu signal act of treachery on the part of one of l clergy.

The city had already held out twenty days,[5] w archdeacon Elmar,[6] whose life Elphege had form preserved, now repaid the archbishop's goodness betraying him to his worst enemies; through treachery of this sacerdotal miscreant, the Danes w admitted into Canterbury, and signalised their entra by burning to the ground one whole quarter of city.[7] Furious at the losses they had sustained, and privations they had endured before the walls, th devoted the inhabitants to a general massacre, in whi it is said many thousand persons perished. The gr

[1] Chronica de Mailros, I. 154.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1011.
[3] Osbernus De Vita S. Elphegi Anglia Sacra, II. 133.
[4] Chronologia Augustinensis, p. 23.
[5] Roger de Hoveden, Matth of Westminster, A.D. 1011.
[6] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 754.
[7] Osbernus De Vita S. Elphe II. 135.

onasteries of Augustine and Christchurch, in strength nd extent, resembled fortresses: into these, therefore, ultitudes of men, women, and children, fled for nctuary. In vain, for the Danes, bursting open the tes,[1] devoted nine-tenths of the inmates to torture or ghter. The males, whether monks or laymen, were pended in the most barbarous manner till they ex- d in agony; they snatched infants from their hers' breasts, and tossed them to and fro upon their es,[2] or dashed them on the ground to be crushed to th beneath the wheels of heavy waggons; the thers themselves they dragged along by the hair of r heads, and cast alive into the flames.[3] Every of suffering which cruelty could devise was in- on the wretched inhabitants; the poor were d to perish amid torments; the great and opulent, with chains, were huddled promiscuously into ships, to be tortured until ransomed by their iends, or put to death by slow degrees. Among these as Elphege the archbishop, Godwin, bishop of ochester, Leofrina, abbess of St. Mildred's,[4] Alfred,

[1] Thorn, however, maintains that . Augustine's monastery was pre- rved from spoliation by a miracle, hich he relates at length. Yet he lds that many of its precious relics d jewels were then hidden, and e monks dying without revealing e places of concealment, they e never afterwards found. Chro- p. 1782.

hen towards the end of their r the Northmen became med of these atrocities, the petration of them was attri- ed exclusively to the refuse of Vikings. See Dr. Dasent's pendix to the Njals Saga, II. . The Chroniclers, however, consistent and unanimous in ir statements as far as these elties are concerned, and at a r period accuse our Scottish neighbours of exactly the same crimes. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 204. When we consider many of the events of more recent history, whether at home or abroad, the wars of the Reformation, the civil contests in France, the rebellion in Ireland, we may discover quite enough to destroy our scepticism as to the sportive infanticide of the Scandinavians.

[3] Having described the execrable torture to which men were subjected, Osberne proceeds:—"Matronæ, quas cæteris clariores nobilitas effecerat dum thesauros quos non habebant coguntur prodere, capillis per omnes civitatis plateas distractæ, ad ultimum flammis injectæ moriuntur." De Vita S. Elphegi, *ubi supra*.

[4] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1011.

the king's reeve, with a number of monks, canons, an wealthy citizens. The caitiff Elmar, who should hav fallen by the stroke of some equitable battle-axe, wa suffered to depart, and bear away with him the reward and memorials of his infamy.

Having remained in the captured city several da the Danes re-entered their ships, taking along w them a multitude of women and children to be sold slaves, or reserved as the concubines of the army.[1] T then moved up the river to Greenwich, where they embarked and encamped within sight of London. portion of the tribute money not having yet been p Ethelred and the great earls had come together deliberate on the means of raising the last instal Much difficulty, it may be presumed, was experi in wringing from the people the immense sum their fears had induced them to promise. All t tressing details attending the levying of this have been buried in oblivion; but it was not unt seven months after the sack of Canterbury that the kin and his Witan were enabled to fulfil their engagemen All this while the intrepid archbishop remained prisoner, exposed to insults and torture, and threatene constantly with death. But no amount of bodil anguish could subdue the firmness of his soul. Life i all likelihood had become a burden to him; he saw th whole land a prey to impious marauders, and, among hi own countrymen, nothing but dissension, cowardic and vice. To be delivered from so afflicting and hum liating a spectacle he longed for death, which he cerely believed would be for him the beginning of l piness. He sternly refused, therefore, to comply with demands of his captors to extort from his oppress and miserable people an additional three thousa pounds of silver to purchase for himself a few evil da for he was old, and to the natural feebleness of age t

[1] Osbernus De Vita S. Elphegi, II. 136.

fects of torture and long imprisonment had now been ded. His invincible magnanimity appears to have cited, no less than the disappointment of their cupidity, e rage of the Danes. Having menaced him with a arous death, they gave the noble Englishman a k's respite, in the hope that calm reflection on the rors and torments he would have to encounter might due his courage.* They were mistaken. At the end of appointed time Elphege was as unshaken in his reso- on as ever, and rather desirous, perhaps, than other- to bring his prolonged tragedy to a close.

n Saturday, April 19, 1012, the leaders of the army ng received a large supply of wine from the South, ated a great feast, which among them, as among glo-Saxons, was a necessary preliminary to poli- liberations. The place of meeting was in the r, probably on some part of what we now call nwich Park.[1] The animals intended to be eaten, y oxen, were dragged into the midst of the mbly, killed, flayed, and roasted on the spot. The und was covered with blood, bones, reeking entrails, ns, skulls; and the ferocious Vikings, gorged and oxicated with flesh and wine, ordered their illustrious ptive to be brought before them.[2]

A single expression made use of by the Chroniclers, ows that the archbishop, though aged and infirm, broken wn by imprisonment, and threatened every instant th death, never lost sight of his duties as a Christian acher, but laboured strenuously for the conversion of s enemies. On the very day preceding his martyrdom, had persuaded one of these chiefs, named Thrum, to ke profession of Christianity and receive the rite of ptism.

When Elphege appeared in presence of Thurkill and s jarls, they once more counselled him to save his life

Chronica, Thorn, p. 1781. Gervas. Actus Pontif. Cant., p. 1648. Annales Monasterii Burtonensis, I. 246.

by obtaining from his friends the sum demanded for
ransom. Undismayed by the menacing countenan
he beheld all around him, the great prelate, with
lofty spirit of a patriot, steadily refused compli
upon which the infuriated revellers started from
seats, and snatching up bones, horns, and skulls,
them at him, till, wounded and bleeding, he almost
beneath their weight. To prolong his sufferings,
struck him, it is said, with the back of their battle-
until Thrum, the convert of the previous day, unab
witness any longer the agonies of his teacher, clov
head with his battle-axe and thus terminated his
On the following day the body of Elphege, by pe
sion of his murderers, was borne to London, an
rently interred in St. Paul's Cathedral.[2]

Ethelred was not in circumstances to be p
about his alliances; he therefore entered into
ations with the murderer of Elphege and the incen
of his country, to take service under the English go
ment. It was either not found practicable to ra
sufficient sum to hire the whole fleet, or else a num
of its leaders preferred a roving life upon the ocea
becoming mercenaries in the pay of the English ki
A majority of the force, therefore, broke up and
persed, while Thurkill, with forty-five ships, joined
standard of Ethelred, and undertook to protect the co
from invasion.

Sweyn, meanwhile, was making immense preparati
for the conquest of England. Sending swift messeng
through all Denmark to rouse his countrymen to ar

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1012. Osbernus Vita S. Elphegi, II. 147. John of Bromton, p. 889. Lappenberg, II. 176, misinterpreting Florence and the Saxon Chronicle, affirms that Elphege enraged the Danes by first promising, and then refusing a ransom. He also imagines "that some extraordi
cause had embittered the I
against the archbishop;" bu
trace of any such cause is t
found in history, nor need we
it, since the withholding of
money was of itself sufficien
excite their fury.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1

superintended in person the building and equipment his new fleet, which contemporary chroniclers describe terms of the most extravagant exaggeration. The inds of barbarians delight, it is true, in pomp and gnificence; but Sweyn was much too sagacious to te in vain ornaments those treasures of gold and er which he could not but know would be indis-sable to the success of his expedition. He may, ertheless, have considered it politic to dazzle the s of the vulgar with gilded vanes and figure-heads in form of birds with wings outspread, or lions, bulls, dragons, whose voluminous folds and erected crests ared in the sun's rays to breath forth fire over the .[1] Rows of shields, either gilded or painted red ite, hung over the rails from stem to stern, while ails of many colours, red, white and blue, flaunted ir.[2]

s in the great heats of summer that the king of orth set sail on his ambitious enterprise, while the c shores were lined with thronging spectators, who wished him—God speed. He had committed the vernment of his native land to his younger son, arald; the elder, Canute, he took with him, apparently rough some suspicion of his fidelity. Emerging from e Sound, and traversing the German ocean, he arrived fely with his great armada at Sandwich in the month August. Here some time appears to have been vainly ent in tampering with the fidelity of Thurkill, who, stead of coveting Sweyn's presence in England,[3] ob-ously discovered in his coming circumstances wholly consistent with his own designs.

The Danish king, therefore, quitted the shores of nt, and rounding the promontory of East Anglia, ered the Humber, on both banks of which he

[1] Encomium Emmæ Maseres, p. 9. Heimskringla, Introduction, I. 141.

[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 10,

[3] attributes to Thurkill a policy which he could not but have foreseen, as I have already remarked, would prove fatal to his own ambition.

reckoned confidently on a friendly reception. Gain
borough,[1] on the Trent, was made his head-quarters, a
there he remained till fame had spread through all t
neighbouring counties an exaggerated idea of his arm
ment. The great earls of Northumbria and East An
lia, regarding the cause of Ethelred as hopeless,
thoroughly despising his character and pretensions, ca
to Gainsborough and swore fealty to Sweyn. The I
Burghs of Mercia followed their example, so that he
recognised as king of all England beyond Watli
street. Taught, however, by experience, he reposed
great trust in the fidelity of his new subjects, but took
of every shire hostages to insure their obedience.
custody of these he committed to his son Canute,[2] y
to overawe the turbulent spirits of the north,
with the fleet in the Humber. Then, having or
a large force of cavalry, consisting chiefly of No
brians, he hastened towards Watling-street, the b
of his own dominions, and immediately on entering
enemy's country took the most effectual measure
subduing the minds of the people by terror. Full lic
of atrocity was given to the soldiers, who, stimulated
authority and their own passions, perpetrated every e
in their power against the wretched inhabitants. T
fertile fields were laid waste, towns delivered to t
flames, groves and orchards cut down, gardens roote
up,[3] churches plundered, men of the military age ma
sacred wherever found, while women of all rank
huddled together in droves, were converted into can
followers.[4] Far and wide rolled the torrent of desol
tion, overwhelming the fairest cities in Mercia a
Wessex, until its progress was checked by the walls

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1013. Historia Ingulphi, I. 56-57.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1013.

[3] *Bois e gardins fait asaa* Lives of Edward the Confesso 30.

[4] Matthew of Westminster, 1013.

London, where Ethelred lay cowering under the protection of Thurkill.

On this, as on so many other occasions, the citizens of the capital displayed undaunted courage and resolution.[1] They probably shared with the rest of mankind a thorough contempt for Ethelred; but as he had entrusted his person to their keeping, they determined on standing by him to the last. His principal aim being thus thwarted, Sweyn marched westwards, and took up his quarters at Bath.[2] It was now distinctly perceived throughout the country that adherence to the cause of Ethelred must prove not only fruitless but destructive. Almost every man of character and position he had alienated from him by his vices, cowardice, and incapacity. Instead of watching over the interests of the people committed to his care, he had shut his eyes against their misery, and passed his time riotously in the company of drunkards and harlots. The noble person and handsome countenance bestowed on him by nature, had contributed greatly to accelerate his ruin, since they furnished a perpetual theme for flatterers, and facilitated his success with women. It has already been seen that in order to supply himself with the materials of revelry and seduction, he seized by fraud or force on the lands of his nobles, whom he caused to be falsely accused and unjustly put to death. To fight in the quarrel of such a man, scarcely defensible from the beginning, had now become a crime against the country. The pertinacity with which a large portion of the nation had hitherto adhered to him in spite of his worthlessness, shows how deeply rooted in their minds was veneration for the great man from whom he descended, and with what extreme reluctance they abandoned him to his fate. With regard to the citizens of London, they refused in the midst of peril and calamity to forsake him at all, for it was not until he had taken refuge in

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1013. Henry of Huntingdon, p. 754.

Thurkill's fleet, which lay in the Thames off Greenwich, and through solicitude for his own personal safety had sailed away to the Isle of Wight, that they despatched commissioners to Sweyn to treat for peace, and prevent the utter ruin of their city. The Lady Emma had already been sent under the charge of Elfsy, abbot of Peterborough, to her brother Richard in Normandy,[1] as had also the two young princes, Edward and Alfred,[2] who were committed to the care of Elfhun, bishop of Durham. The love of display induced Ethelred, even in the depths of his misfortune, to give his wife a guard of a hundred and fifty soldiers, under the command of his son-in-law Edric, who remained about the person of the queen during the whole period of her exile.[3] Desperate as his fortunes were, Ethelred still hesitated to place himself in the power of his brother-in-law, whom he had exasperated by systematic neglect and ill-usage of his sister.

Emma was not one of those wives who look upon it as a duty to conceal the failings or crimes of their husbands. She had constantly transmitted her complaints to Normandy, and probably rather over-stated than otherwise the insults and injuries she had to endure in England. At this time of trouble, however, she seems to have forgotten her rancour, and to have exerted all the influence she possessed in appeasing her brother's resentment. Richard consented, therefore, to afford an asylum to her libertine lord, who, almost worn out by excesses and the infirmities they necessarily bring in their train, was said, at the age of forty-six, to be sinking beneath the weight of old age.[4] Looking forward to

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1013. Chronica de Mailros, I. 154.

[2] In the life of Edward the Confessor, in Norman French, it is erroneously said that Emma was received by her father, Richard Sans Peur, V. 235, for he had then been dead at least fifteen years. Ordericus Vitalis, I. 24.

[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1013.

[4] Osbern, Vita S. Elphegi, Anglia Sacra, II. 132. The absurdity of the monk is pointed out by the editor, who says, "Rex Ethelredus nondum quadragesimum sextum ætatis annum assectus fuerat."

the probability of flight, he had recourse to the practice common all over the world in times of trouble of burying treasure in the earth against a day of need. The site of his underground exchequer was Winchester, whence he now withdrew the gold to defray the expenses of his voyage.[1] To Rouen, therefore, the rejected king of England repaired,[2] where he found a magnificent reception.[3]

While the royal family and their ghostly companions remained in Normandy, an incident occurred so characteri[illegible]c of the manners and perverted ideas of the age, tha[illegible] ought not to be passed over in silence. Elfsy, [illegible]of Peterborough, who had the honour of infusing [illegible]perstitions into the mind of Edward, the future [illegible]f England, paid a visit during his exile to the [illegible]ery of Boneval. Hither, also, the Danes had [illegible] was evident from the state of poverty to which [illegible]t and his monks were reduced. Neverthe[illegible]hey possessed a treasure on which the Northmen [illegible]lue. This was the headless body of St. Flo[illegible]which Elfsy beheld with a covetous eye, and [illegible]vantage of the indigence of the brethren, in[illegible]n to dispose of it for the sum of five hundred [illegible]The trade in relics was one of the largest and [illegible]ive of that period. Nothing was easier than [illegible]ture mummies, and call them the relics of [illegible] which they often sold for their weight in [illegible]rchbishop Ethelnoth having gone to Rome [illegible]nade, on his return, inquiries at Pavia for [illegible] St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, whose [illegible]aid, had been translated to that city; and [illegible]tertaining a profound belief in the bound[illegible]glish wealth, immediately brought forth [illegible]t arm, the very arm with which he had

[illegible]V. 7.

[illegible]nicle of Eng- [illegible]ia Monasterii

[3] Life of Edward the Confessor, Norman French, V. 200. Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1013.

written the "Confessions," "The City of God," and all those terrible theological speculations in which the Calvinists discovered the germs of their doctrines, with the arguments by which they may be plausibly upheld. The price demanded and obtained for this supposititious fragment of the bishop's remains has been exaggerated by credulity into a fabulous amount; no less than a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold,[1] that is from seven to ten thousand pounds sterling. This precious acquisition was made in behalf of Leofric the young earl of Mercia, and husband to the famous Godiva, then engaged in rebuilding the great monastery at Coventry;[2] whereas Elfsy designed his new acquisition for his own monastery in Northamptonshire, on his return presented it with all due reverence to Christ and St. Peter.[3]

[1] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2318. William of Malmesbury, II. 11.

[2] See Dr. Hook (Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, I. 482), where he expresses n[illegible] respecting the enormo[illegible] Augustine's arm.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.[illegible]

CHAPTER XIV.

DANISH SOVEREIGNS OF ENGLAND.

the flight of Ethelred, supreme power in Eng- necessarily into the hands of Sweyn; but no record of the acts of his brief reign has been down to us. The monks, devoured by super- dwell only on the menaces he is supposed to tered against St. Edmund, and the town and in which his remains had been interred. It however, that he imposed a heavy tribute on n, the payment of which was exacted with rity. In an assembly of his chiefs at Gains- he proposed, it is said, a visit to the town of dmunds, which through the influence of the rders had long been exempt from taxation, sequence grown extremely wealthy. This ked his destruction. His death is shrouded Some say,[2] that while sitting on his war- midst of his jarls, the form of St. Edmund, charger, to him alone visible, galloped mbly, and pierced him through with his . Others, with more probability, deal in the dead of night,[4] when access to his ve proved less difficult to the patriotic t on the saint's disguise. There is yet n, which describes the great Viking as illness which he foresaw would prove

, Florence of

Regum An- nce of Wor-

[3] See Ducange, voce *Emissarius*.

[4] Estoire de Seint Æedward, V. 217. Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 123. William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

fatal, and therefore sent for his son Canute, and after giving him instructions respecting the government of their new kingdom, besought him, that should circumstances necessitate his return to Denmark, he would not leave his father's bones in a foreign and hostile la but bear them away with him to their northern ho where they might rest beside those of his forefathers

The Danish king's death having taken the midst of confusion in a foreign country, an a people hourly on the verge of insurrection, tention could be paid to funeral obsequies. mains were, therefore, committed, temporarily earth at York,[2] by order, as has been supposed son Canute, who, perceiving the difficulty and da his situation, either forgot his father's injuncti specting the conveyance of his corpse to Denn found it impracticable to obey them. It seems probable that Forkbeard, during his residenc northern capital of England, had taken to h native mistress, who, now that he was dead, her love and affection towards his body, w caused to be embalmed with a profusion of substances, and then, freighting a ship, and on board, sailed away with what she reg precious deposit, to the Baltic. On her arr mark this extraordinary woman found Canute had preceded her; and she ther shore a messenger to inform him and his b that she had brought to them their fat It appears that Sweyn, before leaving his the conquest of England, had constructe mausoleum in the monastery of the Holy now his sons receiving, it is said, his c caused it to be conveyed ashore and due honour.[3]

[1] Encomium Emmæ in Langebek, II. 477.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 171.

[3] Encomium and compare chesne, p. 252

Whatever may have been the manner of king Sweyn's death and burial, the fact that it had taken place had no sooner been made public than the nation once more broke up into two hostile factions; one, in which the Danes predominated, declared Canute king,[1] while the other, composed chiefly of Anglo-Saxons, resolved upon the restoration of Ethelred, and immediately sent ambassadors to Normandy to negociate his return.[2] In their simplicity and credulity, forgetting that the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, they made lavish professions of loyalty, and entreated him to resume the sceptre of his ancient realm, on condition that he would consent to rule more righteously than before. Having experienced the bitterness of eating another man's bread, Ethelred the "Unready" was now ready enough to promise anything. All that had been said or done against him he engaged to pardon, and swore to regulate his conduct by the strictest rules of equity and justice. Still a keen remembrance of the tribulations he had endured in England for awhile stayed his steps. The thick incense of loyalty suddenly blazing up before him, obstructed his gaze into the future. As he was always selfish, he shrunk from trusting his own precious person to the tumultuous sea of popular passions, but sent over envoys, with the child Edward, in the hope of winning back by his youthful beauty the alienated affections of the English.[3]

The length and intricacy of the negociations show that much doubt and hesitation existed on both sides. A plenary act of concord was drawn up and signed by the nobles of England on one part, and by Ethelred and his friends on the other. He agreed to rule thenceforward in conformity with the principles laid down for him by the leaders of the people, while they solemnly pledged themselves never again to suffer a Danish prince to reign in England.[4] Neither of the contracting

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 171. Radulph de Diceto, p. 466.

[2] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 892. Henry de Knyghton, de Eventibus Angliæ, p. 2340.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1014.

parties understood themselves or those with whom they entered into covenant, nor could they foresee how entirely a few months would change their views. However, when all necessary arrangements had been made, Ethelred crossed the Channel during Lent, and witnessed, wherever he moved, the hollow rejoicings of a restoration.

Knowing what was expected of him, and refreshed by three months deliverance from the cares of royalty, he displayed an energy of character entirely out of keeping with his former life. Canute, after his father's death, had remained in Lindsey, where he was busily engaged in making preparations for a foray with a large body of cavalry into the south of England. But the celerity of Ethelred's movements surprised him in the midst of his plans. While he was deliberating, the English army, with the king at its head, was upon him, and putting both Danes and East-Anglians to the rout, drove the Vikings in the utmost confusion to their ships. Canute, unable to withstand the power of the English king, or to protect the people whom he had betrayed into revolt, turned the prows of his ships southward and sailed to Sandwich,[1] where he put on shore all the hostages given to his father, having first cut off their hands, ears, and noses, as an earnest to the English people of the kind of government they might expect from him.[2]

While the Danish prince was thus glutting his vindictive passions on one side of the island, the Saxon monarch was indulging the same gratification on the other. The men of Lincolnshire—he did not inquire whether through choice or necessity—having joined the standard of Canute, were considered in the light of rebels. In a paroxysm of vengeance, Ethelred set their towns and villages on fire, devastated the whole province, and massacred as many of the inhabitants as fell within his reach.[3] After this act of cle-

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p 892.

[2] Florence of Worcester, Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1014.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, *ubi supra*.

mency, intended to prove how kind and loving a lord he meant to be, he betook himself to the collection of Danegeld, and signalised his restoration by an impost of thirty thousand pounds[1] to allay the cravings of Thurkill and his fleet lying idle at Greenwich. One of the continental Chroniclers, contemporary with the events he relates, has preserved a tradition by no means destitute of probability, which yet, I believe, is nowhere alluded to by our own historians: Ethelred, on his return to England, feeling the decay of his own frame, and wishing to preserve the crown to his house, caused Edward, the elder of his two sons, to be anointed and crowned king, with the full consent and approbation of the people. The writer observes that Edward was then quite a boy, but, with characteristic carelessness, omits to state his age, which, however, could not have exceeded eleven years. The performance of this ceremony, which appeared to strengthen Edward's claims to be regarded as king of England, may have imparted additional keenness to Canute's desire to obtain possession of his person, as until this scion of the house of Cerdic should be removed, he himself must be considered, by all loyal Englishmen, in the light of a tyrannical usurper.[2]

As the autumn came on, nature, co-operating with external and internal enemies, seemed to be on the eve of extinguishing the English nation altogether. The encircling sea rose at once on every side of the island,[3] and, blown inwards by equinoxial storms, submerged all the plain country, sweeping away hamlets, villages, and large towns, some of which never reappeared on

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1014. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 171. The Saxon Chronicle gives twenty-one thousand.

[2] The Canon of Tours makes sad havoc of chronology, crowding into one year events which could not be synchronic. In a note to this writer, the Benedictine editors extract from the Chronicle of Fontenelle, a passage on which I have based the statement in the text. To add weight to the Chronicler's testimony, they observe, that the account is taken Ex Chronici Fontonell. Append. Altera, Auctore Monacho qui scribebat paulo post medium sæculi XI., apud Acherium, Tom 2. Spicil. in fol. pag. 286. See Bouquet, X. 281.

[3] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 892, Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 171.

the map. No account remains of the multitudes drowned on this occasion,[1] neither is it practicable to form any idea of the terror, distress, and misery which these prodigious winter-floods must have brought upon a people grievously impoverished by taxes, thinned by perpetual civil conflicts, and oppressed and bewildered by the perpetual presence or apprehension of invasion.

With a view to the restoration of internal tranquillity, the Danish nobles of Northumbria, East Anglia, and Mercia, were invited to a conference at Oxford, where Ethelred's evil genius betrayed him into a repetition of those crimes by which, before his exile, he had outraged the feelings of the nation. Like other princes of latter times, he had learned and forgotten nothing during his misfortunes, and his infamous son-in-law was always at hand to weave for him the web of guilt. Too honest to suppress his enormities, the contemporary Chroniclers hurry over the scene of blood, without supplying those details which might have extenuated, or at least explained, the motives by which the criminals were actuated. In all likelihood fierce disputes arose respecting the limits of the Danelagh, or the rights and privileges of the burghers of the Seven Cities. Ostensibly to conciliate the opposition, Edric gave a great banquet, at which Sigeferth and Morcar,[2] with many other Danish jarls and thanes, were requested to be present. Entertaining no suspicion of treachery, the nobles repaired to Edric's dwelling, but no sooner were they seated at table than they were set upon and assassinated.[3] The cry of murder having been raised, their retainers and dependents rushed to arms to avenge their masters; but Edric had provided against this contingency; a body of soldiers was at hand, by whom the Danes were soon overpowered, and driven to take refuge in the tower of a church—Ethelred's guards pursued and endeavoured to dislodge

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1014.
[2] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 892.
[3] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1014.

them—but being unable to effect their purpose, set fire to the church, and burned them alive.[1]

After this achievement, Ethelred, like a chief of brigands, took possession of their effects, and evidently designed to extend his sceptre over the Danelagh. An extraordinary incident obstructed the development of his policy. Sigeferth had left a widow, Elgitha, whose influence, on account of her nobility, the king dreaded; he, therefore, ordered her to be seized, and sent to Malmesbury, to be held in close captivity. At this conjuncture, the Etheling, Edmund Ironside, Ethelred's son by an unknown concubine,[2] who appears to have been systematically depressed, and excluded from the councils of his capricious father by Edric Streone, comes prominently on the scene. Seizing on the favourable opportunity to acquire at once wealth and power, he wooed and married the lady Elgitha,[3] and immediately proceeded, in her company, to the Five Burghs, where he rendered himself master of her deceased husband's possessions and authority; by which means, he acquired the position of an independent prince, for the men of the five cities, Anglo-Danes, remarkable for their wealth and courage, became his subjects, which explains the hostility of his father to the measure.[4]

Canute having collected a powerful army in Denmark, and concluded with the neighbouring princes treaties, to secure his own dominions from invasion during his

[1] William of Malmesbury, II, 10.

[2] Some writers pretend that the mother of Ironside was Ethelred's queen, who died before his marriage with Emma. Willelmus Godellus, for example, observes, "Hic exprior-e conjuge Edelredi Regis fuerat natus." Bouquet, X. 262. But the Chronicon Breve S. Martini Turonensis agrees with the best authorities in speaking of him as the son of a concubine. Bouquet X. 282. The author of The Estoire de Seint Ædward, makes the mother of Ironside sometimes the daughter of Count Theodoric (V. 158), sometimes the daughter of Count Torin (V. 246), but nowhere says she was Ethelred's queen. Malmesbury observes that Edmund's birth was obscure, but that, with that exception, he was a worthy prince, II. 10.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1014.

[4] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

absence, sailed, with a fleet of two hundred ships well stored with munitions of war, for England,[1] resolved to subdue it or perish in the attempt. Making descents in Kent and Dorsetshire, he applied himself to the ravaging of Wessex, in the hope of conquering it by terror. Ethelred, whose days were fast drawing to a close, lay sick at Corsham.[2] Edric Streone now stepped forward as a competitor for the throne; and being in command of the royal forces, and intimately connected with the royal family by marriage, thought himself as well entitled to exercise royal authority as either of his rivals; for Canute was a foreign adventurer, and Edmund Ironside a bastard. To make good his pretensions, he exerted himself vigorously in raising new forces, and, by lavish bribes and promises, won over to his side nearly all the commanders of the fleet. Nor was Edmund Ironside idle. Having raised a considerable army in Northumbria, he moved southwards, and effected a junction with Edric's forces. As each, however, aimed at his own aggrandisement, it soon became evident that no cordial union could exist between them. It was Edric's policy, first to destroy one of his competitors, and then the other. Who obtained the priority in death, or by what means the end was accomplished, mattered little. Immediately upon the junction of his forces with those of the Etheling, dissensions arose between them; each, probably, insisted on the chief command, and suspected[3] the other of treachery; a total alienation, therefore, took place, and the allies separated, Edmund retreating into Northumbria, and Edric moving southwards, to try conclusions of policy with Canute. The Danish Viking was not ignorant that in Edric he had a rival of no ordinary genius and influence; he, therefore, welcomed his advent as a circumstance of the greatest possible importance to the fulfilment of his designs.

[1] Encomium Emmæ, II. 480.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1015.
[3] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 755.

Under the thickest mask of dissimulation, the competitors professed friendship towards each other, secretly plotting the while the means of mutual destruction. They foresaw that disease would speedily rid them of Ethelred, and were scarcely less confident that want of statesmanship, and ignorance of strategy, would ruin Ironside. The Etheling, in fact, was deficient in those qualities, which render a prince popular, for the Mercians refused to follow his standard unless upheld in their allegiance by the presence of his father, who, being unwilling or unable to repair to the army, the Mercians separated, and Edmund, deserted and dispirited, again withdrew into Northumbria. Meantime, Edric and Canute having crossed the Thames at Cricklade, gave up all Mercia to pillage and devastation,[1] and having collected immense booty, marched to London, which they vainly attempted to reduce by blockade. It would soon, moreover, they thought, become necessary to try the event of a battle in the field; for Ironside having succeeded in raising an army, and induced his father to join him with a body of Londoners, appeared to be growing formidable. But weakness and treachery clung round the Unready to the last. Playing upon the feebleness of his mind, some secret agents of the enemy suggested to him, that unless he effected his escape, he would be seized, and delivered to Canute. Terrified by this prospect, he deserted his son, and once more took refuge in London,[2] while Edmund, with the earls Uhtred and Thurkytel, reduced to subsist by plunder, collected booty in all those counties which had refused to aid them against the Danes. As the catastrophe of the tragedy approached, the policy of the combatants became more and more intricate and tortuous, and their movements more confused. Armies were beheld marching in all directions, chiefs changing sides, sanguinary executions

[1] Henry of Huntingdon. Florence of Worcester, *ubi supra.*

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016.

taking place. In the midst of this universal hubbub, Ethelred, who had been joined by his son, terminated his unfortunate and dishonourable life, at London, on the twenty-third of April, A.D. 1016, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.[1]

An attempt was made by the gallant citizens and a few noblemen who had remained in the capital after Ethelred's death, to maintain the contest with the Danes, and for this purpose they raised Edmund Ironside to the throne.[2] But whatever may have been the valour of their young king, there was little in the situation of the country to beget any very ardent hopes of success. Weary of civil war—which the struggle had now in truth become—a majority of the nobles, with nearly all the bishops, abbots, and superior clergy, repaired to Canute, then at Southampton,[3] saluted him as their sovereign, and took the oath of allegiance. They, likewise, entered, of their own accord, into the most solemn engagement never to recognise the claims of any son or descendant of their late monarch. Canute, on his part, took God and all mankind to witness, that he would be to them a just and faithful lord. This ceremony concluded, he embarked on board his fleet, and sailed away for the Thames, to undertake the siege of London, whose defenders he resolved to treat as rebels.

He arrived during Whitsun-week, and immediately made his dispositions for commencing the siege. The Londoners beheld, without dismay, the formidable preparations of Canute to reduce their city. Nothing could exceed their intrepidity. They constituted, at this time, the heart and head of the kingdom, and distinguished themselves no less by their wisdom than by their courage. It was now understood that without London, the posses-

[1] Historia Monasterii De Abingdon, I. 431. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016. Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 124. Ex Chronica Willelmi Godelli. Bouquet, X. 262.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 173.

sion of the rest of the kingdom was both unsatisfactory and unsafe. Canute, therefore, determined to obtain thorough possession of it at whatever cost; but its investment being impracticable without the command of the river, which he could not ascend on account of the great fortified bridge connecting London with the southern bank, he caused a vast trench to be cut through the low alluvial land lying south of the city, and, filling it with the water of the Thames, floated a part of his fleet past the bridge, and thus invested the city along the whole south side. To render the blockade complete, he likewise cut a deep ditch[1] and threw up a rampart along the remainder of the wall, so as to prevent all communication with the surrounding country.[2] But London was stored with provisions and abundant munitions of war, and the bravery of its inhabitants, which seemed to increase with the danger, enabled them to make full use of their advantages. No fear, therefore, was entertained by Edmund that the capital would surrender to Canute, so that, with a mind free from solicitude on this point, he departed into Wessex[3] to rouse his hereditary dominions against the common foe. The grandees who had sworn fealty to Canute at Southampton by no means carried with them the sympathies of the people, who, on the contrary, welcomed the appearance of Ironside among them with the loudest demonstrations of joy. He accordingly experienced little difficulty in attracting men to his standard; but intelligence of his movements having been brought to Canute, he detached a portion of his army from the force engaged in besieging London, and ordered it to push on with all speed into Wessex, in the hope of crushing the young king before his levies should be completed. This army Edmund encountered at Pen, on the skirts of Gillingham[4] forest, in Dorsetshire, and completely routed.

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 173.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016.

[4] William of Malmesbury, II. 10. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

He then proceeded rapidly with the organising of his forces, and found himself by Midsummer[1] at the head of a powerful army; for the West Saxons, though they might have considered it politic to dissemble their hatred of the Scandinavians whom their kings had so frequently employed, as well to hold them in subjection as to subjugate their neighbours, were not unwilling to try once more the chances of war before taking finally upon their necks the yoke of a foreign prince. Beginning to apprehend lest his rival might soon become too formidable, Canute now left his jarl Eric to conduct the siege of London, and marched westwards to encounter Edmund. The armies came in sight of each other at Sherston in Wiltshire, and made immediate preparations for an engagement. Ironside is said to have addressed his men in an eloquent and pathetic speech, in which he urged them, by all the motives that could influence patriotic minds, to acquit themselves bravely on that day in defence of their wives their children and their homes;[2] after which he drew up his troops in order of battle, conformably to the best rules of strategy known in that age, and, having ordered the trumpets to sound a charge, pushed forward the boldest of his soldiers to encounter the first brunt of the Danish onset, and disposed the remainder as a reserve in the rear. It may be fairly presumed, that much of the day was taken up in manœuvring and irregular hand-to-hand encounters. On both sides great courage was displayed, victory now appearing to declare for the Danes, and now for the English. Night at length separated the combatants, who ate their suppers and bivouacked on the field in readiness to renew the conflict with the dawn.

No event of these times could be allowed to pass without the interposition of Edric Streone, who, in pursuance of the system of policy he had long adopted, acted on this occasion as the ally of Canute, probably apprehending that the forces of Ironside might otherwise obtain

[1] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1016. [2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

the victory, and frustrate his designs. In the pages of the Chroniclers, he assumes the appearance of a juggler, or magician, perpetrating treasons without motive, and incurring reprobation and infamy almost in sport. His real aim was to crush Edmund by the aid of Canute, then to rouse the popular feelings, and bring them irresistibly to bear against the foreigner, and thus to secure his own accession to the throne. This view alone explains his appearance in the field, at critical junctures, now co-operating with one king, now with another.

At Sherston, the more easily to bring about panic and flight among the English, he cut off the head of a man, named Osmear, who in features and the colour of his hair resembled Edmund, and, riding out in front of his battalions, held up the ghastly token by the hair, and cried out in a loud voice.—"Fly, Englishmen, fly! behold, the head of your king!" The stratagem was nearly crowned with success. For a moment the English within hearing of his voice were smitten with terror, and on the point of giving way; but Edmund appearing in person at the critical moment, ascended an eminence, and taking off his helmet, exposed his well-known face to his comrades, who thereupon resumed courage, and fell with redoubled fury upon the Danes. Edmund, himself brandishing a javelin, hurled it at the duke of Mercia, who skilfully eluding the weapon, it passed on, and that with so much force, that it transfixed two soldiers drawn up in array behind each other.[1] The battle, nevertheless, continued till dark, when both armies again bivouacked on the place of carnage. But Canute evidently perceived that a renewal of the conflict promised no advantage to his army, and, therefore, immediately after midnight, the order to decamp was cautiously circulated through his ranks. Accustomed to stratagems and secresy, the Danes effected their retreat in a silence so complete that not a sound or a murmur

[1] William of Malmesbury, *ubi supra.*

was wafted across the dark plain to the hostile army, which, when the dawn glimmered on their helmets and battle-axes, and expanded the drowsy eyes of the sentinels, beheld with astonishment the country, far and near, entirely cleared of the enemy.

The road to London now lay open to Ironside, but without reinforcements it was not thought prudent to pursue the enemy. Returning, therefore, into Wessex, he with all speed recruited his army, and then, advancing along the northern banks of the Thames, raised the siege of London.[1] The Chroniclers, obeying their desires rather than their knowledge, say the Danes were driven to their ships. The fact, however, was otherwise; for two days later, Edmund, when he again marched westwards to Brentford,[2] found them encamped on the opposite bank in Surrey. Here the narratives become confused and contradictory, attributing to Edmund a victory instead of a check, which, it is evident, he received, since the Danes were enabled to resume the siege of London, while he found himself under the necessity of retreating into Wessex.[3] These small encounters and disasters would be undeserving of notice, did they not serve to show with what extreme reluctance the West Saxons submitted to the Danish yoke. Though more than decimated by perpetual conflicts, they rallied again and again about their gallant chief, and nobly, though vainly, sacrificed themselves to preserve their country's independence.

Before London, however, Canute's reiterated efforts proved fruitless—the citizens beat him back with great slaughter, and provisions running short in his army, he embarked the infantry, and sent them by way of the Orwell, to plunder in Mercia. The cavalry retreated through Kent to the banks of the Medway, collecting plunder as they moved along. Here they were soon joined by the fleet, with the booty amassed in the

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016.
[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.
[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

eastern counties, and abandoned themselves for awhile to ease and revelry, in Sheppey.[1] All that follows in the life of Ironside may be regarded as a series of dissolving views, in which events and personages are confused and blended together, so as absolutely to bewilder the attention, and escape the grasp of the mind. Having no longer real victories to describe, the Chroniclers delight their fancies by imagining what advantages might have been gained but for this or that untoward circumstance. At Otford, in Kent, the Northmen would have been cut to pieces, but for the perfidious counsel of Edric Streone, who had now, in order to precipitate the catastrophe of his country, united his forces with those of Wessex.

Human credulity is, doubtless, very great; but, without charging Edmund with complete imbecility, we can scarcely suppose him capable of falling into the wiles of so notorious a traitor as Edric is represented to have been. We are, therefore, driven to one of two suppositions: either that Edmund was completely destitute of understanding, or that the Chroniclers have not related events faithfully. If he accepted the co-operation of the Mercian earl, it was because he felt the power of this chief to be too great to be trifled with. Not being able to penetrate through the policy of his crafty brother-in-law, he seems to have regarded his erratic movements with bewilderment, and was probably unable to decide whether more evil might not arise to him from his continued enmity than from his capricious friendship. Besides, like many other characters described in history, Ironside may have been possessed by the imperfect consciousness that Edric was conducting him to perdition; but under the spell of an irresistible fascination, he, nevertheless, proceeded, alternately suspecting and confiding.

Canute, whose movements by no means imply defeat, now passed over into Essex, and resumed his merciless ravages, which were obviously intended to bring Edmund

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016.

precipitately to a final engagement. His policy was crowned with success; for the forces of the West Saxons having been hastily assembled, Edmund crossed the Thames, and advanced into Essex. The Danes, enriched by the plunder of all Mercia, were retreating slowly and heavily laden towards their ships, when the English army came up with them at Assandun, or the Ass's Hill.[1] Edmund marshalled his forces skilfully in three divisions, and in that order led them to the attack. Canute, on the other hand, displayed all the strategic ability of which he was master; but recked so little of Edmund and the English, that disdaining the advantage of higher ground, he descended to meet them on the level plain. The hosts advanced, the banners unfurled, the trumpets sounding, and the battle began. In the height of the conflict, the earl of Mercia, with all his adherents, went over to the enemy; and the tide of victory, which appeared at one time to be setting towards the standard of England, changed its course, and flowed towards the Raven Banner. The Danes, in their fury and impetuosity, bore down upon the English, and made a prodigious slaughter. Night came on, but brought with it no cessation from carnage; for the moon was at the full, and with its refulgent brilliance made up, in some degree, for the absence of the sun. Each contending party appeared to feel that the decisive hour had arrived. No quarter was given or asked. As midnight approached, the English broke and dispersed, and the Danes, unwilling to pursue them by the moon's uncertain and perplexing light, through woods and copses, remained on the battle-field, where they lay down to rest amid the thickly-strewn corpses of the slain. All the flower of the nobility of Wessex and Mercia fell on that day.[2] Elfric the earl, Godwin the earl, Ulfkytel earl of East Anglia, Ethelward, son of Ethelwin, earl of East

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016. William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016.

Anglia, surnamed the Friend of God, Eadnoth bishop of Dorchester, and Wulsy abbot of Ramsey, who had come to offer up their prayers to heaven for the champions of England, and shared at once their fall and their fame. As soon as the breaking light enabled the Danes to distinguish the bodies of friends from foes, they buried their comrades; but stripping the English, left their naked corpses on the plain, to be devoured by wild dogs, kites and ravens.[1]

After the battle of Assandun, the fortunes of the two kings were committed to negociation. Either by some fatality, or through the influence of superior genius, Edric obtained the task of conducting these proceedings, and suggested that the quarrel should be settled by arbitration. But the armies had by this time proceeded to a considerable distance from the field of carnage at the Ass's Hill, and were drawn up face to face on the banks of the Severn. On one side, Edmund, with what remained of the chivalry of England; on the other, Canute, with his Scandinavian Vikings, and all such inhabitants of the land as, indifferent to the family of their kings, only desired repose.

The history, at this point, assumes a mythical air, not so much, however, on account of what is related, as through the unskilfulness or dishonesty of the narrators. At the period of Rome's greatest civilisation, Antony proposed to Augustus to decide, by single combat, their contest for the throne of the world; and though the wily nephew of the great Julius eluded the dangerous encounter with a sarcastic remark, the idea of two emperors fighting hand to hand was not thought to be out of harmony with the spirit of the times. We need experience no surprise therefore, that two armies, in a dark and barbarous age, should desire to devolve upon their leaders the duty of terminating a struggle in which they had themselves too long bled. We may, therefore, though not entirely

[1] Encomium Emmæ, Langebek, II. 487.

without scepticism, concede a place in history to the chivalrous conflict between Edmund and Canute on the isle of Olney. According to a tradition, preserved both in chronicles and metrical lays,[1] the two kings, fully armed, and mounted on their war-horses, passed over in boats to the Holm in the Severn, where, with sword and lance, they did battle for the crown of England. Edmund, the taller and more powerful[2] man, rendered doubly fierce and impetuous by despair, soon made his enemy feel the imminent danger in which he stood. Canute, therefore, with soft words, proposed a parley. The work of the sword was stayed, and a conference, at which, we may be sure, the friends of both were present, took place, in which terms of reconciliation were agreed upon. These the National Chronicle describes with concise veracity, though they contain none of those stipulations which the vanity of succeeding writers invented.

By what we may denominate the treaty of Olney, the kingdom was divided, though very unequally, between Canute and Edmund; for while the former obtained Mercia, East-Anglia, and the whole North, the sovereignty of the latter was confined within the limits of Wessex.[3] Edmund recognised likewise the supremacy of the Dane by consenting to pay him tribute, and abandoning London, which could not, therefore, be included in his dominions, to negociate a separate treaty for itself.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016. In the Estoire De Seint Ædward, Mr. Luard's Translation (V.V. 272, sqq.), we find a sort of epic presentation of the royal conflict, with suitable descriptions, speeches, and denoûement. The Chronicler's narative opens as follows:—

"The kings arm themselves with great courtesy,
With coats of mail and shining helmets,
And mount their swift war-horses;
Their lances soon they break,
The splinters of which fly far;
Then they seize their furbished brands,
Now begins the combat," etc.

[2] The author of the Metrical Life of the Confessor, who describes this rencontre in the quaint language of chivalry, speaks of the Danish king as much the older man, and addresses his adversary as "son Edmund," though he had then scarcely attained the age of twenty-one, while the English prince was thirty, by the account of this Chronicler himself, supported by all the probabilities of the case. Estoire de Seinte Ædward, *ubi supra*.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

The citizens agreed to ransom their lives and property by the payment of a sum of money, and consenting to receive the Danes into their city, where, upon the arrival of the fleet, Canute and his army took up their winter quarters.

Policy was now substituted for the sword, and regulated by the lax and tortuous morality of barbarism, proceeded to clear away before Canute all obstacles to absolute dominion. Edmund, though practically only earl of Wessex, was still a thorn in his side. Experience had revealed to him the fluctuating character of public opinion in England, which, after a brief respite from troubles, might shape itself anew, and veer round once more to fill the banners of its ancient kings. The philosophic laws of Rome recognised the equity of attributing the guilt of any crime to him who chiefly profits by it. Applying this principle to the events almost immediately succeeding the pacification of Olney, which in the true Roman style was celebrated by the striking of a medal with the word *Pax* on its obverse,[1] we are warranted in suspecting Canute of a double murder, attended by the blackest treachery.[2]

With Edric Streone, every way worthy to be his coadjutor, he probably took council on the means of delivering the chiefs of the triumvirate from a rival still considered dangerous. In periods of national confusion, instruments of villainy abound; and two of Edmund's chamberlains, who belonged to this class, were bribed to assassinate him, which, it is said, they did by taking advantage of an unguarded moment[3] to impale him on a spit.[4] But as guilt naturally involves itself in

[1] Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 379.

[2] The true idea of this tyrant's character pierces through the narratives of most ancient Chroniclers, even of those who composed their works abroad, far from the real sources of information: "mortuo Adalrado Rege Anglorum, Regnum ejus dolo cepit." Rex Canotus de Danamarca Paganus. Ex Chronico Ademari Cabanensis, in Bouquet, X. 156.

[3] Lives of Edward the Confessor p. 189. William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

[4] Radulph de Diceto, p. 466.

mystery, the manner of his death remains uncertain, some calling in the aid of poison, others attributing it to accident, while there are those who discover in his decease only the common hand of nature.[1] In whatever way he perished, his death is supposed to have taken place on the thirtieth of November, A.D. 1016, after a short reign, or rather agony, of six months; and his remains, having been carried into Wessex, were interred beside his grandfather Edgar, at Glastonbury.[2]

There still survived six competitors for the throne of England, of whom, in one way or another, the bloody-minded Dane considered it necessary to dispose. While meditating upon the means of effecting his purpose, with the least possible scandal, he called together the Witan at London,[3] consisting of the princes, bishops, and nobles of the realm. How many obeyed the summons is not stated, but, whether few or many, they saw that they met under surveillance of the Danish army, with a Danish fleet in the river, and in the presence of a king surrounded by numerous assassins, whose knives were ever ready to spring from their sheathes to bury themselves in the hearts of the king's opponents. Reading base compliance in their countenances, Canute affected to forget the stipulations of the treaty of Olney, and besought the assembled earls, bishops, and thanes to declare whether the deceased king had intended his brothers or sons to succeed him, or that the crown, in case he survived, should pass to him. In their answer, an old Chronicler honestly remarks, "they bore false witness and foully lied;"[4] for, in the hope of thus obtaining the tyrant's favour, or mitigating his resentment against them, they affirmed that not only had Edmund agreed to Canute's succession, but desired that his sons should be placed under his guardianship. He next proceeded

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

[2] Ethelredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 365.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

[4] Florence of Worcester, *ubi supra.*

to demand from them the oath of allegiance, which they took, and in so doing utterly repudiated the claim of Edmund's brothers or sons to the crown. Against these time-serving adulators the patriotic Chroniclers delight in pronouncing the awards of Nemesis, observing, that by the despot whom they preferred before their native princes, they were all either cut off, root and branch, deprived of their honours and estates, or driven ignominiously into exile in foreign lands. Their offspring, moreover, were pursued with vindictive rancour, and, sooner or later, totally exterminated.[1]

Having by these means acquired, A.D. 1017, the sovereignty of England, Canute confirmed the ancient form of administration, retaining for himself the government of Wessex, leaving Edric Streone in possession of Mercia, appointing Thurkill to the earldom of East Anglia, and bestowing Northumbria on Eric, the jarl who had conducted the siege of London.[2] Nevertheless, in the number of those who might hereafter dispute the crown with him, he discovered grounds for alarm. The murdered king had left two sons, Edmund and Edward, whom, it is said, Edric Streone advised to be slain at once. But Canute, adopting the policy ascribed in Hamlet to the king of Denmark, sent the children to Sweden, to be secretly disposed of by the sovereign of that country, his ally.[3] The Swedish prince refused to become Canute's executioner, and in order to place the Ethelings beyond the reach of the tyrant conveyed them into Hungary, where, exactly in the manner described by the feudal romances, they were tenderly brought up.[4] Edmund died childless, but Edward married Agatha,[5] a princess of German imperial family, and by her had three children—

[1] Ethelredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 365. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 907. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2317.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1017.

[3] Simeon Dunelmensis, De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 176. Chronica de Mailros I. 155. William of Malmesbury, II. 10.

[4] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1017.

[5] Radulph de Diceto, p. 467.

Edgar, the famous Etheling; Christina, a nun, of whom little is known; and Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland. So far the criminal designs of Canute were frustrated, but other assassinations remained to be accomplished, and Canute was not the man to shrink from any amount of guilt which he might think necessary to secure him peaceful possession of the English throne. Among his rivals were Edwy, a natural brother of Ironside, and another Edwy of uncertain parentage, known in those times by the singular appellation of King of the Churls. Most historians confound these two Edwys, but their separate existence is proved by this, that the King of the Churls, after having suffered banishment was reconciled to Canute, while Edwy the Etheling encountered a different fate.[1]

The evil genius of the House of Cerdic counselled the immediate assassination of Ironside's brother, and named Ethelward, the head of one of the noblest families in England, as the man who could best perform this bloody service for the king, since he was the friend and most trusted intimate of the Etheling.

Canute sent for Ethelward,[2] and, without shame or subterfuge, proposed the murder to him at once. "The earl of Mercia," he said, "has spoken to me, and shown how easy it would be for you to lead the Etheling to his destruction. Do this thing, and I will not only confirm you in the possessions and honours of your family, but will take you into my heart, and you shall be dearer to me than a brother." Ethelward instantly perceived by the allusion to his paternal inheritance, the peril in which he stood, and therefore replied that he would do the king's bidding if it should be any way in his power. But his intention was far otherwise, since he loved the Etheling, and hoped, by undertaking his assassination himself, to prevent the perpetration of the

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1017.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

crime, which, if he refused, Canute he knew would soon achieve by some other hand. His merciful imposture was unavailing; the impatient tyrant first outlawed Edwy, and then, by the aid of more compliant friends, put him, in spite of his innocence, to death.[1]

There still remained the two sons of Ethelred by Emma, but they were with their mother at the court of the Duke of Normandy, and could not easily, therefore, be reached. In order the more readily to obtain possession of them, he made proposals of marriage to Emma,[2] engaging that the offspring they might have in common should succeed to the crown, not doubting her consent, or that she would bring her children with her into England, when he might easily deal with them according to his pleasure. Ambitious, profligate and heartless, the widow of Ethelred immediately bestowed her hand on the man who had pursued her wretched husband to death, and remorselessly imbrued his hands in the blood of the royal family. In the month of July, A.D. 1017, she repaired to England,[3] where her nuptials with the ferocious Scandinavian, almost young enough to be her son, were immediately solemnised.[4] But Duke Richard, divining by royal instinct the design of Canute against his nephews, retained them in Normandy, where their lives were indeed safe, but where they forgot their native tongue, their native manners and predilections, and acquired habits and preferences which led to their own ruin, and the ruin of their country.

An illustration of Canute's treachery and cruelty, which may be regarded as a proper preface to the

[1] "Jussu et petitione regis Canuti eodem anno innocenter occiditur." Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 176. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 907. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2317. The last two writers, however, mistake the Saxon Chronicle, and confound the Etheling Edwy with the King of the Churls.

[2] Glabri Radulphi Historiorum L. II., Bouquet, X. 14, with the note of the Benedictine editors. Chronicon Willelm. Godell. Bouquet, X. 262. Chronica de Mailros, I. 155.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1017.

[4] Lives of Edward the Confessor, p. 190.

history of Edric Streone's murder, occurred on the very threshold of his reign. Uhtred, earl of Northumbria, of whom I have already spoken as the ally of Ironside, found it necessary, on the establishment of the Danish power, to make his peace with the conqueror. He had inherited with his estates, and voluntarily taken upon himself by marriage, a multitude of sanguinary feuds, so that he could nowhere in his earldom stir a step without the risk of encountering an enemy. He had incurred the hatred of bishop Aldhun, by marrying and divorcing his daughter; he had espoused the quarrels of an opulent country gentleman, named Styr, by taking to wife his daughter, with an immense dowry; and he had converted this new friend and his adherents into foes, by his passion for polygamy, which induced him to put aside Styr's daughter, to become the son-in-law of king Ethelred, who bestowed on him the princess Elfgiva.[1] Canute, immediately on his accession, sent messengers to Uhtred, inviting him to attend his court at Wiheal, and pledging his faith to afford him safe conduct, both in coming and going. Upon assurances so solemn, the earl did not hesitate to comply with his sovereign's invitation; but no sooner had he entered the hall of audience, than our merry Macbeth[2] ordered forth from behind a curtain a body of assassins, under the lead of Thurbrand Hold, who, falling upon Uhtred and his retainers, murdered them all, to the number of forty; upon which Canute seized the earldom of Northumbria, and bestowed it on the bloody jarl Eric.[3] The leader of Uhtred's assassins was one of those whose enmity he had taken upon himself, by the articles of his second marriage.

During the Christmas festivities[4] of A.D. 1017 another

[1] Simeon De Ucthredo comite Northanthymbrorum, pp. 80, 81.

[2] William of Malmesbury (II. 10), who brands the tyrant's conduct with the charge of inhuman levity.

[3] Saxon Chronicle; Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1016.

[4] Matthew of Westminster, Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1017.

event occurred characteristic of the new king, and strikingly significant of the policy by which he regulated his conduct. Through the misty narratives of the Chroniclers the truth is visible, that the Danish conqueror regarded Edric Streone in the light of a disguised competitor rather than as a subject. He knew that the advantages he had derived from his co-operation were the result of deep-laid designs — not the effects of friendship. By the plans which he revolved in his own mind, he divined what must be going on in the mind of his rival, and dreaded lest that consummate perfidy which had already consigned so many princes and nobles to a premature death, might sooner or later immesh him in its toils. At first he judged it would be unsafe to deprive him of his earldom, or attempt his life; but he had been careful, in the division of the kingdom, not to augment his power by extending his command beyond the frontiers of Mercia. When repairing to London, therefore, in company with the other nobles of the realm, to share in the regal festivities of Christmas, Edric probably went attended by a retinue sufficiently large to inspire Canute with alarm. It certainly filled his own mind with a strong conviction of security, since he ventured, even in the palace, to beard the Danish prince, to reproach him with his parsimonious distribution of honours, and to insist on his own claims to much higher distinction than he had obtained in the state.[1] Assuming the tone of an equal, he affirmed what was undeniable—that the Scandinavian Viking was chiefly indebted for the throne of England to him. All the particulars of this fiery altercation were probably never made public; but at the reproaches of Edric, Canute's countenance is said to have become inflamed with anger. The cant attributed to him by the Chroniclers, he could not have had the hardihood to make use of to his partner in treachery and guilt. Accustomed to bloody deeds, fury incited

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 11. Compare Simeon of Durham, p. 177.

him to add another crime to the list, if we ought not rather to infer, from the stationing of Eric fully armed in the next chamber, that all the arrangements for the assassination had been previously made. At a word from Canute, the Norwegian jarl rushed into the apartment, and with his battle-axe felled Edric to the ground. With the coolness of a pirate-chief, the king and his accomplice took up the remains of their victim, and hurled them forth through a window[1] into the Thames. Neither did he wish this perfidious murder to be concealed; but issued orders that the body of the Mercian earl should not be interred,[2] but left to float up and down upon the waves, a ghastly spectacle to both friends and enemies.

He next kindly remembered Ethelward, who had deceived him in the matter of the Etheling Edwy's murder, and ordered him to be beheaded, because he would not imbrue his hands in the blood of his dearest friend. There is much confusion respecting this earl, who is supposed by some to have been banished three years later; but as he is said to have been of the noblest blood in England, we may fairly conclude him to have been the son of Ethelmar the Great, and therefore to have excited the special jealousy of Canute. Another innocent victim to the tyrant's fury was Norman, brother of Leofric earl of Leicester. Having been among the most distinguished friends of Edric Streone, it was apprehended he might seek to avenge his death, by stimulating the midland counties, in which he possessed great power and authority, to revolt.[3] To this man the Abbey of Croyland had, during many years, trusted for protection. But the friendship of the great was not to be obtained without an equivalent, and the monks therefore,

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 275. Chronica de Mailros, I. 155. Annales Burtonienses, I. 247.

[2] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1017. The Chroniclers vary in their accounts of this assassination. Compare William of Malmesbury, II. 10. Roger de Hoveden, Matthew of Westminster.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1017.

for the services rendered them by Norman, had to alienate from the princely domains of the monastery the manor of Baddely, to him and his descendants, for the term of a hundred years, at the nominal rent of one peppercorn.[1] Many other adherents of Edric, illustrious for birth and station, were condemned to the scaffold, among whom was Brihtric, son of Elphege,[2] earl and governor of Devonshire. Fictitious crimes were attributed to them—in some cases the sanguinary king affected, with singular effrontery, to be avenging the cause of Ethelred and Edmund—but their real offence consisted in that power and influence among the Saxons, which might some day render them formidable. It is possible, also, as affirmed by some Chroniclers,[3] that Canute found these executions and confiscations necessary to satisfy the horse-leech appetites of his Danish followers for titles and lands. His next step was to make the English taste, through pecuniary exactions, the evils of being ruled by a foreign lord. The sum of ten thousand five hundred pounds was exacted from the citizens of London,[4] and seventy-two thousand from the rest of the nation. Even these heavy imposts would not have sufficed, had not Canute, perceiving the tameness of the people, judged it safe to send the greater part of his fleet and Danish army back to the Baltic.

The body of troops on which he thenceforward relied for keeping down the English, was equally remarkable for its exquisite organisation and the smallness of its numbers. If we are to interpret literally the account[5] transmitted to us of the formation and discipline of these huscarls—the Prætorian guards[6] of a barbarian conqueror

[1] Chronicle of Croyland, A.D. 1017.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 177.

[3] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 438.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1018. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 177. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 907.

[5] Suenonis Aggonis Historia Legum Castrensium Regis Canuti Magni; Scriptores Rerum Danicarum, III. p. 139, sqq. For an account of this little work, see the preface of Langebek.

[6] Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, I, 168; and Lipsius De Magnitudine Romana, I, 4.

—we must infer that our country had then reached the utmost pitch of weakness and degradation. It required nearly forty thousand men[1] to maintain tranquillity in Britain long after it had been reduced to the condition of a province and incorporated with the Roman empire; but now the whole Anglo-Saxon people, together with all the other dwellers in the island, were held in subjection by a force which, according to some, did not equal half a Roman legion[2] apart from the auxiliaries, and at the highest computation did not exceed six thousand men.

When Canute had resolved upon organising this small standing army, he issued a proclamation, inviting all such to take service under his command as were either oppressed by poverty[3] or preferred to honest industry the leisure and license of a camp life. To dazzle their imaginations and stimulate their vanity, the sword-smiths and armourers throughout England were simultaneously employed in fabricating splendid and costly weapons for the new guard, so that, according to an ancient Chronicler, the whole island resounded with the clang of the hammer and the anvil. Swords, halberds, and battle-axes, richly inlaid with gold, were the arms provided for these mercenaries, who wore besides gilded helmets on their heads, and golden bracelets on their arms.

When a sufficient number had been enrolled from all parts of the king's dominions, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and, probably, from all other parts of Europe, they proceeded in multitudes towards the palace, where they received their arms and equipments, took what was equivalent to an oath of allegiance, were duly

[1] Three legions of twelve thousand five hundred men each. Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, I. 27.

[2] Sweyn (III. 144) estimates their number at three thousand; but Saxo Grammaticus, in Stephanus's notes on Sweyn's work, maintains they were double that number. Langebek, by way of reconciling the two statements, supposes the original number to have been three thousand, and to have been doubled by degrees.

[3] Canuti Magni Legum Castrensium Historia, cap. II.

numbered, and allotted their rank and station in the army.

The officers consisted of such persons as were distinguished for their birth or opulence, or for their attachment to the Danish rule; and the laws and regulations by which order and discipline were enforced in the Thingamanna[1] or camp, were drawn up by two of Canute's private secretaries.[2] The greatest care was taken that these mercenaries should be liberally supplied with provisions, and that they should never have to complain of their pay being in arrears. As they belonged to different countries, they were necessarily distinguished from each other by manners and language, so that to preserve harmony and mutual goodwill among them, demanded no little prudence and judgment. In what part of London their barracks were situated is not known, but they appear to have been all cavalry, and to have spread themselves daily over the country in the vicinity for the purpose of exercise and watering their horses in the neighbouring burns and rivulets.

To ingratiate himself the more with these soldiers, Canute constituted himself their commander, so that he appeared to be closely bound up with them, not so much as their king as by being a trooper like themselves. That he was constantly present at their exercises may be inferred from the tragical incident which has supplied so many writers with a theme of praise: taking offence one day at the insolence or awkwardness of a member of the guild, he snatched from him his halberd, and dealing him a furious blow, killed him on the spot. The rest of the soldiers, beholding the murder, fiercely grasped their arms and closed about the king, who appeased their resentment by submitting himself at once to the judgment of those whom he

[1] On the various appellations of these guards, see the copious notes of Langebek, and compare Kemble, Saxons in England, II. 120, Lappenberg, II. 202.

[2] Ope and Eskil, for an account of whom see Saxo Grammaticus, in Langebek, III. 146.

affected to regard as his comrades and peers. To inflict on him the punishment adjudged by the Camp Laws to such an offender, the crafty mercenaries perceived would be to forfeit pay, distinction, and free quarters upon England, for which reason they left to the king himself the delicate task of determining the amount of the wergild of the fallen warrior. In a fit of contrition, or more probably through a stroke of policy, he condemned himself to pay nine times the ordinary fine; and thus ensured to himself not only the pardon of the Thingamanna, but the warm praises of historians.

We have not been made acquainted with the internal working of this system, which, however, unquestionably answered the end for which it was called into existence, since it held the Anglo-Saxons in tame submission throughout the country, while all the members of its own body were restrained within proper bounds by the fear of punishment. No act or circumstance was too minute or insignificant to be thought worthy of attention by the law, which determined the way in which the men should take out their horses to the ponds and rivers, forbidding one trooper to ride up a stream so as to muddy the water for his comrades' horses; prohibiting all rough and uncouth language; and insisting upon the utmost respect for each other's rights. When a member of the guild appeared incorrigible, he was condemned to expulsion, which was almost equivalent to a sentence of death, for having been allowed his choice to depart by land or water, if he preferred the former, he was conducted to the edge of a wood, and there watched until his form disappeared in the gloom. Three shouts were then raised to enable him to steer his course away from his comrades, for if, by pursuing the windings of the forest-pathway, he returned into their presence, he became the victim of his own ill-fortune. Should the offender resolve to face the perils of the sea, the whole body of the Thingamanna escorted him to the sea-shore, and there putting him on board a boat with oars or sails,

thrust forth the bark into the waves, after which he was to be deemed a public enemy, and if driven back to the shore by storms or contrary winds might be immediately put to death. We may easily concede to Canute and his ministers the credit of having originated so Draconian a code, but must be permitted to be a little more sceptical respecting the statement that its extreme penalty was never once incurred. Indeed, the whole scheme, in the form in which it has come down to us, approximates very closely to the institutions of Utopia; so that, although we cannot refuse it a place in the record of Canute's reign, we may yet reasonably doubt whether we know all that ought to be known on the subject, in order to form a just idea of the establishment and its authors.

The northern monarch, though cruel, rapacious, and full of treachery, possessed abilities of no ordinary kind. While crimes seemed necessary to his advancement or security, he perpetrated them without scruple; but when he had obtained the object of his ambition, prudence taught him to moderate his ferocity, and seek to conciliate the nation he had subdued. History presents us with many examples of similar princes. To win a crown they consider all actions justifiable—hypocrisy, perjury, proscription, assassination, massacre, with every other enormity that can debase or pollute human nature. Possessed of the reins of power, they learn to esteem virtue more profitable, and, like Augustus Cæsar, put on the semblance of goodness, to soothe or overreach mankind.

In this art of reigning, Canute excelled. Regarding Danes and English equally as the ministers of his will, he made no distinction between them, but distributed offices and emoluments impartially among both. Circumstances, moreover, greatly favoured his policy. Numbers of rich Englishwomen, when left, by the death of their husbands, in possession of large estates,

threw themselves into the arms of Danish lords,[1] either through a politic preference for the ruling race, or because a majority of the Anglo-Saxons, according to the united testimony of bishops and chroniclers, were grievously deficient in those qualities which contribute to the happiness of domestic life. On the vices imputed to them it would be unprofitable to dwell. Anticipating the profligacy of modern times, or reverting to the corrupt manners of Imperial Rome, clubs[2] were formed, the members of which lavished their caresses and their wealth on a single mistress, and if such individuals afterwards undertook the responsibilities of married life, it is easy to understand how slender were the chances of happiness for them or their wives. The Northern rovers, on the other hand, being then in the period of transition from piracy to a settled mode of existence, were soothed by the unusual pleasure of possessing a peaceful home and a wife, with sufficient wealth to reconcile them to the loss of the excitements of a marauding career. Their superiority as husbands is implied in most of the narratives of the times. Fond, occasionally to infatuation, of their English wives, who doubtless greatly surpassed in tenderness those of their own country, they clung to them even when guilty of the most criminal acts, and could hardly be forced by the evidence of their senses to admit the guilt of their helpmates.[3]

By his judicious measures Canute established his throne so firmly, that in less than three years after the Conquest he considered it safe to return and pass a

[1] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 441.

[2] "Horret animus, meminisse, quod plerique faciunt, dum calamitatem istam patiuntur, qua symbolum una conferentes, communi pretio meretricem plures mercantur," &c., &c. Lupus Sermo ad Anglos. Scriptores Rerum Danicarum, II. 468. Compare Ducange voce *Symbolum convivium;* Muratori Antiquitates, II. 431. Van Holst, de Eranis, p. 35. Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece, III. 75, sqq.

[3] See in the Historia Ramesiensis, III. 438, sq., a long story of a stepmother, who killed her husband's daughter and buried her in a field.

whole winter in his native land,[1] thus setting the example of that policy which was afterwards followed by the Norman Bastard. No commotions seem to have arisen during his absence, but it is probable that many of the English nobles, by their conversation or conduct, supplied a pretext for further confiscations, banishments, and assassinations; for immediately on his return, Canute assembled the Witan at Cirencester, on Easter Sunday, April 17th,[2] and obtained from that timid and servile assembly a sentence of exile against earl Ethelward.

He had now enjoyed sufficient leisure to study the character of his new subjects, and perceived that to hold them in obedience, no policy was likely to prove more effectual than conciliating the Church. The savage Viking now, therefore, clothed himself in the virtues of a pious prince. During his own and his father's wars, innumerable minsters and monasteries had been overthrown or desecrated, which excited against him the hostility of both monks and clergy. To appease their resentment he applied the revenues of the state to the rebuilding of such edifices as had been ruined during the late troubles, and in erecting new ones. Among the latter was the magnificent minster of Assandun, the Hastings of the Danish Conquest, which was erected at the joint expense of earl Thurkill and the king. Both these sanguinary chiefs, with a large assembly of bishops and clergy, were present at its consecration by Wulfstan, archbishop of York,[3] after which Stigand, one of his chaplains, was appointed its first mass-priest.[4]

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1019.

[2] Florence of Worcester, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1020.

[3] Florence of Worcester, *ubi supra.*

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1020. This passage seems to occur in one MS. only, and is thus given by Mr. Petrie, Monumenta Historica Britannica, p. 427: "And caused to be built there a minster of stone and lime, for the souls of the men who there were slain, and gave it one of his priests, whose name was Stigand." There seems no reason to doubt that this priest was identical with the prelate and statesman who afterwards so nobly distinguished himself for his piety, virtue and patriotism, when to profess a love of England or anything English was

Another incident connected with church affairs may be related, as characteristic of the manners of the clergy. The see of Durham, or Lindisfarne,[1] having been three years vacant, a chapter of the canons was at length assembled to elect a bishop. It seems probable that the jovial Northumbrians conducted affairs of this kind with considerably less gravity than we are apt to imagine; for in the midst of their deliberations, a jolly but respectable priest, named Edmund, stood up, and observing their perplexity, inquired jocularly why they did not elect him for bishop? The joke was well-timed. The canons at once put an end to their discussion, and taking the merry priest at his word, elected him on the spot. But the matter would not have been complete without a miracle. Alarmed perhaps by their own rashness, they proclaimed a fast of three days, and resolved, through permissible necromancy, to consult the shade of St. Cuthbert. Mass, therefore, was celebrated at his tomb by the bishop-elect, and during the service a sepulchral voice was heard issuing from the grave, which thrice named Edmund bishop.[2]

Gradually, with caution and unswerving perseverance, Canute rid himself of all those who had aided in elevating him to power. In A.D. 1021, he considered himself so firmly seated in England, that he could venture to aim a blow at the celebrated Thurkill, commander of the Danish fleet under Ethelred, whose defection had turned the scale in Canute's favour, and who, as a reward, had been raised to the earldom of East Anglia. Ulfkytel, who defeated Sweyn at Ringmere, having been slain at Assandun, left a widow the inheritor of his vast

to incur the hatred of court and king. Dr. Hook, in his life of Stigand, has either overlooked this passage or hesitated to identify Canute's priest with queen Emma's chaplain, in which capacity the doctor informs us Stigand first appears in history. Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, I. 504.

[1] Simeon De Dunelmensi Ecclesia, p. 30.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1020. Roger of Wendover, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1020. Radulph de Diceto, p. 467.

estates. This was Edgitha,[1] who, following the example of her mother-in-law, queen Emma, married Thurkill, the probable murderer of her lord. With her the earl was now banished;[2] but in less than two years, Canute, who, like most other tyrants, was capricious, became reconciled to Thurkill, whom he entrusted with the government of Denmark and the guardianship of his son, but retained with him in England the son of the viceroy as a hostage for his father, who doubtless had not forgotten how Canute had dealt with other noble hostages, whose nostrils he slit, and whose ears and hands he cut off at Sandwich. More recent chroniclers invent a different kind of fate for Thurkill, relating that immediately on his landing in Denmark, the nobles of the land, fearing lest his presence might cause internal dissensions and civil wars, attacked and slew him, and cast his naked corpse upon the shore a prey to birds and wild beasts.[3]

The list of political exiles was not yet complete, for soon after, Canute's ingratitude and perfidy drove into banishment the great Norwegian jarl Eric, who had conducted the siege of London, and been rewarded for his long services by the earldom of Northumbria, which was governed under his authority by Eadulf, a man of weak and sordid character, though brother to the noble Uhtred.[4] Such honours, however, were to the Danish

[1] About the birth and history of this princess there hangs the utmost possible obscurity. Dr. Lappenberg, II. 168, calls her Wulfhild, but at page 207 he loses sight of Wulfhild, and calls her Eadgyth, having found the name Edgitha in Florence, A.D. 1021. Simeon calls her Egitha, but we find that a princess of a very similar name, Elgitha, was married to Edric Streone. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1009. John of Bromton, Chronicon, p. 877, gives her the name of Edgiva, and with him Knyghton agrees, p. 2314. Higden, III. 270, denominates her Edgiva.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 177.

[3] Osbernus Hist. de Translatione S. Elphegi, Anglia Sacra, II. 144. But Wharton, the editor, contradicts the statement of Osberne, and correctly observes that Thurkill was not banished till A.D. 1021, when he was sent to Denmark with his wife Edgitha.

[4] Simeon De Ucthredo Comite, p. 81.

king's adherents only so many steps towards outlawry or death. While his own throne remained tottering they were spared, because he might again have occasion for their swords, but as his power became established they were removed one after another, to make way for persons to whom he owed no gratitude, and who had therefore no pretence to presume upon their services. Among these victims to his jealousy and suspicion was Hakon Jarl, who, having married Gunhilda, daughter of the king's sister by a Wendish prince, may have betrayed symptoms of a lurking ambition natural to all Scandinavian nobles. The reports, dimly transmitted to us through the Chronicles, place him at the head of a formidable conspiracy to deprive Canute of his kingdom and life. That there really was some danger from his continued residence in England may be inferred from the fact, that it was not judged safe to dismiss him with abruptness and contumely. An honourable form was given to his extrusion, since he was nominally despatched on an important embassy; but, by one of those accidents peculiarly frequent during Canute's reign, the great jarl either perished at sea, or was assassinated in the Orkneys. Both traditions have been preserved, and, in either case, it is hardly too much to surmise that the fatal blow may have been directed by an influence emanating from London.[1]

Canute, like the Norman Bastard, perceived that the best means of consolidating conquest was to ensure the co-operation of the Church. His mind was beginning, moreover, to be tinged with the superstition of his subjects; and inclination, therefore, united with policy to engage him in what were then esteemed works of piety. Up to the year 1023 the remains of archbishop Elphege[2]

[1] Florence of Worcester, Roger de Hoveden, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1029.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 273. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1023. Radulph de Diceto, p. 468.

had rested in peace in St. Paul's Cathedral; but now the monks and clergy of Canterbury expressed their desire to possess his bones, and it was resolved that he should be disinterred, and translated with great pomp to his own minster.

No circumstance can illustrate more strikingly the manners and ideas of those times. Ethelnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, who having baptised and anointed Canute, had always been in high favour[1] at court, Brithwine, bishop of Sherbourne, Elfsy, bishop of Winchester, with a multitude of priests and monks, met on Whit-Sunday at the church of St. Paul, in the midst of a vast concourse of people assembled from all parts of London to witness the strange ceremony. Immediately on reaching the cathedral, the primate despatched a messenger to announce his arrival to Canute, who happened just at that moment to have entered the bath, of which—to their great credit be it said—the Danes of all ranks were particularly fond.[2] Not to keep the holy man waiting, the lively and jocose monarch, still a thorough Viking in manners, sprang out of the water, and dispensing with all the ceremonies of a regal toilette, put on a common pair of shoes,[3] and throwing a cloak over his naked body, hastened in that primitive fashion to meet the assembled nobles and clergy at St. Paul's. No idea that they were about to engage in a gloomy or even a solemn ceremony appears to have been entertained by any of those present; on the contrary, it was evidently regarded as a rather sprightly[4] enterprise. In sight of the immense audience, the monastic sextons began digging at the wall in which the corpse of the martyr had

[1] Gervasii Actus Pontificum Cantuariensium, p. 1651.

[2] Chronica, Johannis Wallingford, III. 547. "Sabbatum in quo solent balneare."

[3] *Subtalares:* a sort of shoes which the monks wore at night in summer. The same name was likewise given to the shoes worn by bishops during the performance of divine service. Ducange in *voce.*

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1023, which says, "they bore him with a worshipful band and sprightly joy to Rochester."

been lodged; but instead of experiencing any difficulty, the stones spontaneously dropped out of their places, and fell about them like forest leaves touched by the first frosts of winter. According to rule, the body, when disinterred, was found in perfect preservation,[1] and having been wrapped, coffin and all, in a linen shroud, was lifted on their shoulders by the monks, and through the midst of the palpitating multitude borne out of the cathedral.

The excitement felt by our ancestors on such occasions is unintelligible to us. As the statues of Athena, in Pagan times, were looked upon as the protectors of cities, so, in the Dark Ages, were the bodies of saints and martyrs; knowing which, Canute apprehended a general rising of the Londoners to prevent the departure of relics which they had begun to regard as the Palladium of the City. In the morning, therefore, before quitting the palace, he ordered a detachment of his *huscarls* or guards to station themselves at some of the distant gates of the capital and organise a mimic insurrection, while other bodies took post on the bridge and along the banks of the river, to preserve order. Safe under the protection of these trusty Danes, the monks, with coffin on shoulders, crossed St. Paul's churchyard and hurried down one of the narrow streets leading to the Thames, followed by a vast procession with the king and archbishop at its head. Here, one of the royal galleys, brilliantly painted and adorned with golden dragons, the symbols of Wessex, and filled with armed men, pushed up to the bank to receive the precious freight. Canute was the first to spring on board, and having been followed by the archbishop, who superintended the embarcation of the relics, took the rudder, and with his own royal hands steered the galley to the farther shore.

On the policy of this day the Viking chief might, and probably did, pride himself ever after. Secretly caring no more for Elphege and his bones than for the head of Edric

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 891, 900.

Streone, he nevertheless, to ingratiate himself with the monks and clergy, affected deep devotion, and emerging first from the barge, took the martyr's coffin and placed it in the carriage which was to bear it to its place of destination. He then commanded a detachment of his fierce huscarls to protect the funereal cortège, and sat down with the archbishop on the parapet of the bridge until the procession had passed out of sight; after which, he took a jocular leave of Ethelnoth, telling him, playfully, that he had saved his life from the rage of the citizens, who might have risen in defence of so great a treasure. He added, that he himself would willingly have accompanied the procession to Canterbury, but that public business, which could not be neglected, required his presence in London. "My queen, however," he said, "together with my little son, who dwells with you in your county of Kent, will supply my place, and with this assurance I bid you God speed." Ethelnoth then joined the vast multitude of monks, clergy, grandees, and people who accompanied the martyr's remains through Plumstead and Erith to Rochester.

In these operations three days were consumed, and on the third came queen Emma, with her little son Hardicanute, and joined the procession. It was the midst of summer, and as the vast crowd moved along, the dust rose in clouds into the blue sky. It was a holiday period for all Kent—men, women, and children, on horseback and on foot, constantly augmented the length of the procession. In one part musicians were beheld playing on the harp; in another, troops of dancers and singers; while the martyr's corpse, laid out in state on a triumphal car, advanced in front of all, "like the ark of the covenant."[1]

The vast procession entered the suburbs of Canterbury with the monks of Christchurch at its head, some

[1] The words of Osbern, Historia de Translatione S. Elphegi, Anglia Sacra, II. 147.

with loud voices chanting psalms and hymns, while others bore aloft gold and silver crucifixes flashing with gems. From the joy and gratulation of the people, a stranger might have imagined they were bringing back to their city some great chief, who by wisdom and valour had risen to be the saviour of his country. Elphege, indeed, was a patriot as well as a saint; but by the crowds then assembled his public virtues were much less the objects of veneration than the wonder-working power of his bones, which having been borne to the cathedral,[1] there lay in state for several days. When the time arrived for depositing them once more in the earth, the archbishop and bishops, with a host of inferior clergy, again assembled, and the saint's relics were committed, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, on the north side of the altar, where, as the Saxon historian relates, they continued to be a source of comfort and health to all who devoutly repaired to the spot.[2]

At a later period Elphege's biography, and the history of the translation of his relics, were ordered by the archbishop to be read annually in the cathedral, the one on the anniversary of the removal of his bones, the other on that of his martyrdom.[3]

It has been often observed that the history of a people comprises as well its superstitions, fantastical beliefs, and characteristic errors, as its martial achievements and political institutions. Accordingly, to know our ancestors, we must familiarise ourselves with what they used to think of their conquerors, powerful prelates, and other distinguished men. Viewed through the thick haze of tradition which enveloped his memory in England, Canute, unlike his grim father, Forkbeard, appears to us as a jovial tyrant, much given to laughter and jesting, especially with his sacerdotal friend Ethelnoth.

[1] Gervasii Actus Pontificum Cantuariensium.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1023.

[3] Eadmer, Vit. Anselm I. Nevertheless, both the productions above mentioned abound with fictions and imaginary miracles.

Once at Wilton, we are told, during the merry-makings of Whitsuntide, the conversation at table happening to turn on St. Editha, Canute protested, amid roars of laughter, that he never could believe in the sanctity of the daughter of so libidinous and tyrannical a king as Edgar. As he was known to entertain but a mean opinion of Saxon saints in general, Ethelnoth seized on this opportunity to punish his scepticism. The tomb of Edgar's canonised daughter being close at hand, he took the king thither, and having caused the lid of the sarcophagus to be raised, the lady within immediately sat upright, and by looks and gestures displayed an evident inclination to fly at the unbelieving king. Terrified, as well he might be, at this spectacle, Canute fell half-senseless to the ground, and afterwards, when he came to himself, was only too thankful that St. Editha in her wrath had not stricken him dead. By fictions like these both monks, clergy, and laity amused their leisure hours, while they at the same time gratified their patriotic devotion at the expense of their foreign oppressors.[1]

Any popularity, however, which Canute might have lost by making free with the reputation of the saints, he amply made up for by exciting the gratitude both of the clergy and the monastic orders by his lavish donations to churches and monasteries. At Winchester he is said to have indulged largely his generosity towards the church, bestowing lands and manors[2] on the minster, the interior of which he likewise enriched with gorgeous and costly ornaments, including a magnificent coffer to contain the relics of St. Berinus, candelabra with numerous branches, and immense quantities of gold and silver plate, encrusted with jewels. The date of these donations, chiefly made at the instigation of queen Emma, appears to be determined by the statement that

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 909.

[2] Annales Ecclesiæ Wintoniensis, Anglia Sacra, I. 290.

they were bestowed while the king was meditating on plans of foreign conquest, and making preparations for realising his ambitious policy.[1]

Many of the subsequent achievements of Canute are involved in obscurity. In A.D. 1025, learning that troubles had broken out in his northern dominions, he equipped a fleet, and sailing to the Baltic with a mixed force of English and Danes, pitched his camp in the Holm by Helga, the sacred river,[2] where he encountered Ulf and Eglaf, the chiefs of Sweden. The ground was fiercely contested by both parties, but at length the Danish king was driven back, and the Swedes remained masters of the place of carnage. And now the days of the conqueror of England might have been brought suddenly to a close, but for the presence in his army of a young Englishman at the head of the Anglo-Saxon contingent.[3]

The Danes, after their defeat, remained sullenly in their camp, which they expected to be stormed on the morrow by the Swedes. Canute either could not or would not fly, but with his usual intrepidity made all practicable preparations to receive the enemy. The English, through doubts of their loyalty, or in conformity with the practice of the times, were encamped apart. Their leader, who bore a name destined afterwards to become renowned throughout the world, took advantage of Canute's military dispositions to execute a project almost unexampled for daring. Addressing his countrymen with martial eloquence, he urged them by many considerations to perform an achievement which must inspire their king with admiration of their valour. He made light of the success of the Danes in England, which he attributed to the caprice of fortune, and said the king would concede to them the first place for valour if they now conquered those who had conquered him.[4]

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 11.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1025.

[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1024.

[4] William of Malmesbury, II. 11.

He then placed himself at their head, and sallying forth silently, fell in the hours of thick darkness upon the camp of the victorious Swedes, slaughtered an immense number, and following the remainder in their flight, continued the carnage for several miles.

When the morning broke, the English had not yet returned from the pursuit. Canute, therefore, observing their camp empty, imagined they had been cut off, or gone over to the Swedes during the night. Still, whether supported or betrayed, he resolved to face the enemy, and, drawing up his soldiers in battle array, advanced to renew the contest of the previous day. But in the Swedish camp all was stillness and silence. No smoke arose from the fires of soldiers cooking their morning meal—no horses neighed—no trumpets sounded. Were the hostile leaders laying some snare for him? Moving forward with extreme caution, he speedily perceived unmistakeable tokens of the night's slaughter—piles of deserted booty intermingled with corpses and pools of blood.[1] Ere he had yet recovered from his astonishment, the English chief returned at the head of his countrymen, and described the surprise and destruction of the Swedish army.[2] Canute naturally received him with gladness and gratitude, which was augmented by the appearance of an embassy from the defeated princes, sueing humbly for peace,[3] and offering to do homage to Canute for their dominions.

The English general was earl Godwin, whose name occupies so illustrious a place in the history of England. His story is perhaps one of the most remarkable on record. During the troubles which brought to a close the reign of Ethelred, it will be remembered that Wulfnoth, Childe of the South Saxons, broke away from the

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 908. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2318.

[2] Dr. Lappenberg (II. 206) places this event in A.D. 1019, and supposes the contest to have taken place, not with the Swedes, but the Wends.

[3] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1024, desirous of enhancing still farther the merits of Godwin, relates that he took Ulf and Eglaf prisoners.

king's fleet, with twenty ships, and became a Viking on the high seas. In this situation, history loses sight of him for awhile. He had excited the jealousy and provoked the hatred of his uncles, then all-powerful at the court of Ethelred, and their influence completely barred his return to favour.

Unfortunately, no Chronicler has described this part of Wulfnoth's career. He disappears as a pirate, and re-appears as a herdsman, living with his only son in the seclusion of an immense forest—probably that of Andred.

After one of those battles, in which the Northmen were defeated, a Danish chief, flying for his life, lost his way in Wulfnoth's forest.[1] Having wandered about all night, separated from his companions, he met at grey dawn a youth of noble bearing, but in humble garb, whom he entreated to direct him to the Danish camp. "I am a Saxon," replied the young man, "and were I to become your guide, I should peril both my own life and yours, because my countrymen are out in strong bands, scouring the woods and plains, so that our escape would be almost impossible. Tarry, therefore, in my father's hut till nightfall, and I will then conduct you to your friends." The Danish earl took from his finger a massive gold ring, and offered it to the young herdsman, who replied, "Keep your ring; what I do for you, I will do without reward. If I succeed, I shall ask, instead of all other recompense, your friendship, by which I may rise in the Danish army, for among my countrymen, after this, I can look for nothing but death." Godwin then led the earl to his father's hut, where Wulfnoth, who had now ceased to be ambitious for himself, earnestly recommended to the chief the fortunes of his son.

We are not told what impression the bearing of these two great Saxons made upon the Dane; but from the

[1] Knytlinga Saga, p. 191.

sequel it may be inferred that his mind was filled with admiration. As soon as the stars were out, Godwin left the hut with his father's guest, and, familiar with all the intricacies of the forest, conducted their retreat so skilfully, that they reached in safety the camp of Canute. The northern chief was not ungrateful. In the feast of that day, he seated Godwin beside him, in the highest place of honour, as his son, and then presenting him to the king, described the perilous services he had received at his hands, and besought him to throw open before the youth the career of fame.

Step by step, Godwin rose to distinction. His genius, fertile in resources and full of grandeur, rendered the highest employments accessible to him, and his courage, which never failed in any emergency, won for him the friendship of Canute. It was probably not until after this expedition against the Swedes, in which the Danish monarch owed both crown and life to Godwin, that he bestowed on him the hand of his own sister,[1] and raised him to the earldoms of Kent and Wessex.

The internal tranquillity which England enjoyed at this period may be ascribed equally to the ability and crimes of Canute. All who might have disputed the throne with him he had ruthlessly murdered or exiled. To excite the slightest suspicion in his mind, was to

[1] The contemporary author of the Vita Ædwardi Regis, published by the Master of the Rolls, p. 392, observes: "Diutius probatum, ponit eum sibi a secretis, dans illi in conjugem sororem suam." William of Malmesbury, II. 13, likewise relates that Canute gave Godwin his sister, but depreciates the value of his testimony, by connecting with it a strange fable, invented after the Conquest, to gratify Norman malignity. Sir Henry Ellis (Introduction to Domesday, II. 117) speaks of Githa as the sister, meaning probably daughter, of Sweyn, and in the following page refers to Kelham (Illustrations of Domesday Book, p. 225), for the assertion that she died by a stroke of lightning. Kelham's authority for this is Malmesbury, who accuses her of being a slave-dealer, and obviously insinuates that, by her crimes, she had provoked the vengeance of heaven. Dr. Lappenberg (II. 208) supposes Githa to have been the sister of Ulf Jarl, on the authority of Adam of Bremen, p. 237. But the writer of the Life of Edward, quoted at the beginning of this note, knew Githa personally, and was therefore more likely to know who she was than Adam of Bremen.

incur his implacable enmity. No one who could be dangerous was spared; and the cruelty of his disposition being generally known, inspired with terror all those who might otherwise perhaps have obeyed the promptings of ambition. This produced throughout the realm a profound calm, at least on the surface of society, though the seeds of future troubles, destined to prove fatal to the Danish rule, were then widely sown, and left to germinate in secret.

Among the punishments of crime is the necessity it creates of reproducing itself. Men in certain circumstances, when they have once entered upon the career of guilt, find it impossible to pause. Ambition in the depths of their souls, craving perpetually, like an insatiable monster, for excitement, urges them into fresh enormities, which, before they have been perpetrated, appear to promise contentment and repose. But when the step has been taken, the victim of his own appetite perceives another necessity for action rise before him, and thus he toils up the steep of villany, till some sudden calamity or death cuts him short.

Thus it was with Canute. Having subdued the Swedes, and rendered them subordinate to his policy, if not to his dominion, his desires projected themselves over the mountains of Norway,[1] where Olaf was toiling to repress piracy, and by the introduction of Christianity, to soften and purify the manners of his people. Reformers are seldom popular. The profligate jarls, and their wives, who profited by plunder on the sea, and dissipated their acquisitions in licentiousness, hated their ascetic king; and the pagan priesthood also, whose craft he threatened, had become equally inimical. When the news of this general defection reached Canute, he seized eagerly on the opportunity. Sending emissaries into Norway, with an abundance of gold and silver, he corrupted the leading men, who saw in him a prince more

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 178.

congenial to their own tempers and dispositions. They engaged, therefore, on his appearance with a fleet and army off the coast,[1] to throw off their allegiance to Olaf, and range themselves under his standard. Accepting the invitation, which he had purchased with the treasures of England, Canute, with an armanent of fifty ships, repaired to Norway, and having expelled Olaf, who fled into Russia, was hailed by the jarls king of Norway.[2] Some time after the departure of the English fleet, the unhappy Olaf, returning to his own country, and attempting to regain the sceptre, was assassinated by the jarls.[3]

Canute's return from his Norwegian expedition took place in A. D. 1029, and at the following mid-winter festival, which he celebrated at Winchester, the Witan drew up that important Code of Laws which still goes under his name. From an attentive consideration of the spirit by which it is pervaded, we may be able to form some conception of the state of public opinion in England at the begining of the eleventh century. The Church of Rome may then be said to have done its utmost towards undermining public and private morals, by substituting superstitious observances for the practice of virtue, by exalting the monks above the married clergy, by putting matrimony itself under a ban, condemning it as a heinous offence in the servants of the altar, and giving currency to the idea that it is at best, even in the case of laymen, a sinful indulgence. It is easy to perceive what effects such a theory must inevitably produce. Bishops mass-priests, and even monks, might take to themselves wives; but the women with whom they thus united, dominated by the belief and sentiments of the times, would regard themselves as little better than prostitutes,

[1] Radulph de Diceto (p. 468), who says that the jarls despised Olaf on account of his humanity and piety.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1028.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1030. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 911.

and, almost of necessity, adopt an ethical practice conformable to their internal convictions. To discover the real moral principles which pervaded society, we must study the Penitentials, which reveal the inward working of the national mind, the secret excesses and offences by which the very foundation of morals was sapped, and the pernicious arts and contrivances through which Rome endeavoured to profit by the depravity of its supporters.

The clergy in the age of which I am speaking, in addition to concubines,[1] had not unfrequently two or more wives,[2] and the people, following their example rather than their precepts, fell gradually into the extreme of licentiousness. To this was added a most barbarous inhumanity towards the poor and needy, who, having been betrayed by insidious stratagems into the power of those who plotted against them, were seized, bound, and sold into slavery in foreign lands. Even infants in the cradle were not exempt from these machinations, but having been kidnapped and concealed, were disposed of to slave-dealers like cattle.[3] But general observations

[1] The concubine of a priest was denominated *Focaria*, which meant originally a girl who looked after the fire, "famula quæ focum curat. Præsertim vero Focariæ appellatæ Presbyterorum et Clericorum concubinæ." Occasionally, however, the focariæ were distinguished from the concubines. In the M.S. Institutes of Peter, patriarch of Jerusalem, quoted by Ducange, we find that priests kept their penitents and spiritual daughters as mistresses: "In primis dolentes referimus quod nonnulli Sacerdotes aut parochiales ecclesiarum rectores jam duxerunt in consuetudinem, imo verius damnabilem corruptelam, tenere continue et publice in domo sua vel aliena Focarias, seu etiam concubinas non solum extraneas, sed etiam, quod dictu quoque nefas est, spirituali quodam incestu filias suas spirituales et pœnitentiales tali contubernio polluunt et profanant."

[2] In more est, ut quidam duas, quidam plures habeant, et non nullus quamvis eam dimiserit, quam antea habuit, aliam tamen ipsa vivente accipit. This although "certissime norint quod non debeant habere ob aliquam coitus causam," uxoris consortium, the latter offence is, "quod nullus Christianus facere debet." Dr. Milman, History of Latin Christianity, III. 21, note. See Ordinances of the Council of Enham, article 5.

[3] Scriptores Rerum Danicarum, II. 466. Compare the Dooms of King Ine, articles 11, 53. In the Dooms of King Athelstan, art. 22, we discover the root of the American Fugitive Slave Law.

would fail to suggest a true picture of the condition of England during the reign of Canute, and I shall, therefore, enter into a detailed account of his laws, which must be looked upon as outward and visible signs of the real inward disposition and temper of the nation.

The Code is divided into two parts, Ecclesiastical and Secular; and the former, aiming at the extinction of heathenism, begins by commanding the worship of one God. The protection of the Church and of the king is to be inviolate; so that a murder committed within the sacred walls is to be held unpardonable, and all present are to pursue the offender, who can by no means escape death, unless by taking sanctuary in some place whose privileges even the king dares not invade.[1] He may there negociate and obtain his pardon, by the payment of heavy fines to the Church. The efforts of the clergy to maintain their influence over the public mind are strongly marked. Churches are to hold different ranks in public estimation, from the lofty minster which towers over the buildings of great cities, to the humble edifice, not even surrounded with the burial-ground, which stands in the open field. To enhance their own consequence, they insinuate that devils would be present everywhere, if not expelled by their arts of exorcism practised at baptisms, and the hallowing of the housel. To encourage priests to eschew concubines, and even lawful wives, they are assured that such as avoid all intercourse with women, shall be honoured as thanes or nobles, which shows the extreme difficulty of subduing nature. The Papists have always perplexed themselves about matrimony,[2] and endeavoured to find ingenious reasons for not marrying

[1] Ecclesiastical Laws of Canute, article 2. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 918. See also Lingard, History and Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church, I. 273. On this subject see the treatise of Paolo Sarpi De Jure Asylorum, Opere Varie, II. 110-136.

[2] See the famous treatise of Sanchez, De Matrimonio, three volumes folio, in which the licentiousness of casuistry, and the bold prying of priests into the private lives of their penitents, are pushed to the utmost extreme.

one class of women, and marrying another. In Canute's time, men were prohibited to marry within six degrees, though what those degrees were is not explained; nor with the widow of any kinsman within those degrees; nor with their godmothers, nor with a hallowed nun, or a divorced woman, nor with any relative of their former wives.

The king and the church converted the offences of the people into a prolific source of revenue: if they did what was judged wrong, they were to pay a fine; if they abstained from doing what was right, they were again fined. Some fines were for the preservation of morals; some to insure social observances; while others had reference to the next world; since persons for disobedience were threatened with damnation. When a man died, his relatives were called upon to pay, at the open grave, souls-scot—that is, the price of his soul, or fee for admission into Paradise; from which we must infer, that without payment of this fee the corpse would not have been interred, and the pagan idea that while the body remained unburied the soul could not be happy, evidently pervaded society.[1] Every minster claimed a right over the corpses of all who had lived within what was called the shrift district or jurisdiction of the Confessional, because, even when a corpse was laid out beyond its confines, the souls-scot had still to be paid to the minster to which the man had belonged when living.

[1] In my History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece, III. 421, I have sought to give expression to the Hellenic idea. "Among the Greeks, the dead were invested with a sanctity which all good men esteemed inviolable, and this persuasion acquired additional force, from the belief that, though separated, the spirit and the body were not wholly independent of each other; for, upon the treatment experienced by its remains, the state of the soul was in some measure regulated in the realms below. If these received the rights of interment, the spirit was allowed freely to traverse that stream, dusky and inviolable, which surrounded the realms of Hades. If not, the ghost, cold and desolate, wandered along its hither shore during the space of a hundred years; after which the laws of Orcus relented, and permitted it to taste of happiness, amid the groves of Asphodel, and those blissful bowers where poets and sages devoted the circle of eternity to the culture and pure delights of wisdom."

The observance of Sunday was conformable to the notions which are now again becoming prevalent—namely, that half the Saturday and all the hours till Monday morning should belong to it. The early closing of banks, counting-houses, and shops on Saturday afternoon, forms part of this idea, and traces its origin to the Dark Ages. In Saxon times, markets were habitually held on Sundays;[1] but Canute's Witan opposing a severe theory to a lax-practice, aimed a blow at this ancient custom, which had been introduced by the monks and prolonged for their benefit. Even the folk-motes, or popular courts, were, by the sages of Winchester, forbidden to assemble on Sunday, except on urgent occasions. Hunting, together with all secular employments, was likewise prohibited. Ordeals and oaths were not to be resorted to on any fast or festival days, and all persons were commanded to go to housel at least thrice in the year.

The secular division of the laws begins by affirming that every man is worthy of folk-right, that is, apparently, could demand that justice should be done him in all cases. This, in the modern interpretation, is supposed to mean the original unwritten compact by which a freeman enjoys his rights as a freeman—the common or customary law of the land.[2] The words of the code, however, seem to apply to every Christian, slave or free, because even slaves were supposed to have a claim to justice.

Throughout those times, that is from the Saxon invasion to a period long subsequent to the Conquest, the right of sanctuary existed under strange modifications. In pagan times it was connected with the worship of stones, trees, and wells;[3] around which a piece of ground

[1] See Mr. Stevenson, Preface to the Abingdon Chronicle, II. LXXX. sqq., and compare Ducange in vocibus *Feria* and *Nundinæ*.

[2] Such is the opinion of Mr. Thorpe, from whom I differ with reluctance. Glossary to Ancient Laws and Institutions of England.

[3] See Canons of Edgar, art. 16.

was enclosed and called "Frithgeard"—asylum or sanctuary. It was likewise the consecrated area round a temple, which, in Christian times, became the churchyard; when it was forbidden the faithful to perform vows at any of these places. St. Eligius observes, in one of his sermons, that no Christian should presume to offer up vows in fanes, before stones, or trees, or fountains. These stones, in later times, owing to the desertion of the ancient religion, were usually found in forests or desert places, where the ruins of pagan worship were suffered to remain unmolested. Thither secretly, probably at night, repaired the partisan of the old faith, to offer up prayers to his favourite Gods, when such adoration had become unlawful and severely punishable.

The spirit of these laws would, at the commencement, appear to be merciful, since it is said that life ought not to be sacrificed for slight offences, which were rather to be expiated by slight punishments. This, if acted on, would have indicated a great advance in civilisation; but the principle having been promulgated, no attempt was made to develope it in practice, for, immediately after, we find the sale of Christians permitted within the realm, and even beyond seas, though "not too readily." It was, however, adjudged to be illegal to sell them to heathens, by whom were meant the Moors of Spain, or the Muslims of Africa and Asia.

One of the most interesting facts to be learned from the study of Anglo-Saxon law, is the pertinacity with which the people clung to their ancient usages, hereditary vices, and superstitions. What Alfred and his predecessors forbade, had again to be denounced by Canute, showing that in both these periods of English history, the same causes produced the same effects. In each edition, so to speak, of the laws, we find that sorceresses, witches, adulteresses, diviners, prostitutes, morth-workers were to be driven out of the land; but the Witan having solemnly pronounced their decision, nothing further was probably done, except throwing

open a door to fearful persecution, especially against such women as might happen to offend the monks or priests, who, in Catholic countries, have always wielded the weapons of superstition. Among the classes of offenders enumerated in the laws, there is one about which hangs much obscurity—I mean the morth-workers, by some supposed to have been assassins or secret poisoners. I imagine that, by the term, were signified those enchantresses who, like the witches of Hellas, pretended to destroy cruel oppressors or faithless lovers, by fabricating their images in wax,[1] then roasting them before a slow fire, piercing them the while with pins or needles, which, as they penetrated deeper and deeper, at length reached the heart and caused instant death. Another of these wild superstitions is called *blot;* another *fyrht*, which may probably mean phantasmagoria, shows, or illusions produced by enchantment, and intended to create terror in those who beheld them.

By one article of the law certain men were denounced as adversaries and outlaws of God, meaning probably Pagans, who were to be banished unless they amended. The mercy declared at first soon gave way before the love of property, since persevering thieves and robbers were to be put to death. Canute's grandfather, Harold Blatand, had introduced Christianity into Denmark, and perished in an insurrection of the heathens. His son, Sweyn, father of Canute, reverted to heathenism, and destroyed the churches built by Blatand.[2] Canute, therefore, was born and bred a heathen, and when converted by Ethelnoth, displayed all that violent hatred of the religion he had forsaken which usually characterises new converts. This we discover in his laws; he fiercely prohibits heathenism, at the instigation, no doubt, of

[1] Theocriti Pharmaceutria.

[2] Yet, according to the author of the Encomium Emmæ (II. 480), Sweyn had erected a monastery in honour of the Holy Trinity, and within it a tomb for himself. See the note of Langebek.

the bishops and other members of the Saxon Witan, not sorry perhaps to be able thus to strike a blow at the the Pagan Danes who had so often routed them in the battle-field. In prohibiting heathenism, the law explains what is meant by the term. To be a heathen, then, was to worship idols,[1] or, with the followers of Zoroaster, to adore the sun, moon, or fire; other objects of adoration common to the Greeks and Romans were rivers, water-wells, stones, forest trees of every kind—the fetish worship of modern Africa.

Canute's Witan re-enacted the laws of Edgar and Ethelred respecting the coinage;[2] established an inspector of weights and measures; insisted on the duty of every man to contribute towards the building and repair of fortresses and bridges, towards the national levy in time of war, and to the equipment and maintenance of a fleet. To interest the sovereign in multiplying outlaws, it was ordained that their estates should escheat to the king, and that whoever harboured them should for every such offence forfeit five pounds. The difference is recognised between Wessex, Mercia, and Danelagh. The laws of the former two had now become identical; it is observed that in the Danelagh there was a fine not noticed in the other provinces, namely, for fighting, the Danes being more turbulent and quarrelsome.

Having, as I have said, commenced the law in a merciful spirit, the Witan at Winchester, when they began to ponder over their property, became cruel as Red Indians. Affecting still to care for the souls of thieves, they let loose their fury against their bodies, condemning them sometimes to lose their heads, sometimes their feet—in other cases their eyes were torn out,

[1] Even in the Kentish laws we find the most fearful penalties denounced against idol-worship, "If a husband, without his wife's knowledge, make an offering to devils, let him be liable in all his substance;" Dooms of King Wihtred, article 12. But Alfred carries his severity still farther, "Let him who sacrificeth to gods perish by death;" article 32.

[2] On this subject consult Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 378.

they were scalped, had their noses and upper lips cut off, in short were reduced to the most frightful objects, though they were to be considered as God's creatures. Nor was Christ's sacrifice to be forgotten. In the announcement of the principle we discover the dawnings of civilisation, but the old habits and propensities of the Vikings would not yet suffer it to prevail. Neither was pity towards slaves among the characteristics of the age; if a theow failed to clear himself at the ordeal the first time, he was branded with hot irons; and for the second offence lost his head. When a man was judged to be untrue to all the people, and happened to have no surety or protection, he was to be slain without ceremony, and buried in the place allotted to thieves. If anyone took his part he shared the same fate. A friendless man, who is called a stranger or comer from afar, was to be imprisoned[1] till he could prove by the ordeal that he meant no harm, an enactment which threw a serious impediment in the way of locomotion, whether for the purpose of curiosity or trade.

Little improvement had taken place in the condition of women since the Saxons first landed on the shores of England. In their original country any transgression of the laws of chastity was visited with ferocious cruelty, and though the ferocity of the unwritten law had undergone some mitigation, the same spirit still pervaded the enactments which regulated the intercourse and relations of the sexes, as is manifest from the way in which adultery was punished. If a wife became guilty of this offence, she was not only exposed to public shame, but all the possessions which the law secured to married women, were forfeited to her husband, and she had her nose and ears cut off. When the affair was brought to trial, either by compurgation or

[1] The early laws were far more humane in their treatment of strangers; thus Alfred forbids to vex strangers, article 33. In the Kentish Laws there is an article which rendered hospitality to strangers hazardous, since if a man entertained a wanderer three nights he became liable for his conduct. Dooms of Hlothhære and Eadric, article 15.

ordeal, and she failed in her defence, the bishop appears to have acquired over her despotic power, so that he might have pronounced almost what doom he pleased.

To comprehend the manner in which the ordeal process was conducted, it seems necessary to transcribe the language of the law itself. "Concerning the ordeal, we enjoin, by command of God, and of the archbishop, and of all bishops: that no man come within the church after the fire is borne in with which the ordeal shall be heated, except the mass-priest, and him who shall go thereto: and let there be measured nine feet from the stake to the mark, by the man's feet who goes thereto. But if it be water, let it be heated till it low to boiling. And be the kettle of iron or of brass, of lead or of clay. And if it be a single accusation, let the hand dive after the stone up to the wrist; and if it be threefold, up to the elbow. And when the ordeal is ready, then let two men go in of either side; and be they agreed that it is so hot as we before have said. And let go in an equal number of men of either side, and stand on both sides of the ordeal, along the church; and let these all be fasting, and abstinent from their wives on that night; and let the mass-priest sprinkle holy water over them all, and let each of them taste of the holy water and give them all the book and the image of Christ's rood to kiss; and let no man mend the fire any longer when the hallowing is begun; but let the iron lie upon the hot embers till the last collect: after that let it be laid upon the 'stapela;' and let there be no other speaking within, except that they earnestly pray to Almighty God that he make manifest what is soothest. And let him go thereto; and let his hand be enveloped, and be it postponed till after the third day, whether it be foul or clean, within the envelope. And he who shall break this law, be the ordeal with respect to him, void, and let him pay to the king a hundred and twenty shillings as 'wite.'"[1]

If a man corrupted his female slave, he paid two fines,

[1] Dooms of King Athelstan, article 7.

one to the Church, the other to the king, and she herself became free.

There is great obscurity in the law which concerns the mode of raising the king's revenue. It would appear that the royal lands and lawful fines were sufficient to support the sovereign, but it was customary to make free-will offerings to the king's reeve or sheriff towards augmenting the royal income, which, by degrees, changed their character and became compulsory payments. If the sheriff demanded a fine when not due, he was himself fined heavily. When a man died without a will, his lord was forbidden to take more than the regular heriot or succession tax, though it became his duty to overlook the distribution of the property between the wife and the children according to their legal claims. In the case of an earl, the heir on coming into his property paid, as heriot, eight horses, four of them saddled, four helmets, four coats of mail, eight spears and shields, four swords, and two hundred mancuses of gold. The same rule applied to thanes and others, according to their degree, with some variations in Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia and the Danelagh.

When a husband died in quiet possession of estates, his wife and children were to inherit peaceably, but if proceedings had been commenced against him, they were to be continued against them as if he were still living. The law forbade a widow to marry within a year from her husband's death. If she broke the law, the punishment was severe. She forfeited her morning-gift, together with all other property which she had received from her deceased husband. If they were lands, the nearest kinsman took them. The new husband was liable for his whole wēr to the king. Women were exposed to constant violence, since even a rich widow[1] might be taken from her home forcibly; when the law interfered, if she choose to remain with the abductor,

[1] Compare Ordinances of the Council of Enham, article 47; Laws of Alfred, article 34.

she lost her property, but if she preferred returning to her friends, retained it. To prevent women from dooming themselves rashly to a life of celibacy, even widows were not suffered to take the veil too precipitately. When they succeeded to estates, they were allowed a whole year, if necessary, to pay the heriot. The management of women who had lost their natural protectors was, in those ages, a subject of much perplexity. A guardian was forbidden to sell his ward,[1] whether maid or widow, to a person whom she disliked. Distinction was in such cases drawn between selling the person, and selling the right to possess the person, which was rather nominal than real. If a man desired to obtain a rich heiress, he applied to her guardian, and agreed to pay him large sums of money, or to make over to him an estate or estates for permission to wed his ward, to whom Canute's laws nominally, at least, gave the privilege of choosing for herself.

When a man stole anything and carried it home, his wife rendered herself his accomplice if she took charge of it, and locked it up in her store-room, her chest, or her cupboard; otherwise she was deemed innocent, since she could not forbid her husband bringing things into the house. This Canute's Witan regarded as a merciful improvement of the old law, which not only involved the wife in her husband's punishment, but even the sucking baby in the cradle who had not yet tasted meat. To what law they refer is unknown. In the most ancient code of Wessex, it is decreed, that if a man steal with the knowledge of all his household, they are to be sold into slavery, down even to the boy of ten years old; but no mention is made of the infant in the cradle.[2] Other cruel practices are said to have been prohibited by this article of Canute's law, but the impatient legislators would not pause to enumerate them.

[1] Compare Kemble, Saxons in England, II. 96, sqq.

[2] Laws of King Ine, article 7, and compare article 57.

In these legal enactments we discern the commencement of that awakening of conscience which it is the aim of all religions to excite. Though still in the prime of life, there appeared symptoms in Canute's constitution which made him apprehend that the end of all things for him was not far off. Amendment of life in those days, when the shadow of Rome fell darkly over the whole of Christendom, was not deemed sufficient. The papal policy had successfully exerted itself to diffuse far and wide the belief that, for complete remission of sins, a pilgrimage to the Holy City of the West, the resting-place as it was fondly believed of St. Peter and St. Paul, was likewise necessary.

This duty might be performed by both high and low, but to enhance its efficacy in the case, at least, of a royal personage, it was always deemed expedient to pave the way to the Eternal City with gold. Mindful of this truth, Canute having resolved upon the pilgrimage to Italy, provided himself abundantly with rich gifts, gold, silken garments, and precious stones, with which to allay the insatiable thirst of the successor of St. Peter. With a retinue sufficiently strong to guard his person and treasures, he crossed the sea and landed in Flanders.[1] The way to Rome was, in those days, thickly beset with difficulties and dangers. Not a wood could be traversed without the risk of encountering banditti; more especially those of the Alps were overlooked and commanded

[1] Respecting the date of this pilgrimage, historians disagree. Dr. Lappenberg, relying upon Wippo, secretary to Conrad the Salic, and the authorities collected by Langebek, Danicarum Rerum Scriptores, II. 493, supposes it to have taken place in A.D. 1027. With him Dean Milman, History of Latin Christianity, II. 424, agrees. But in order to adopt this date, we must not only set aside every English Chronicler, but assume an interpolation in Canute's own letter, in which he plainly refers to his conquest of Norway in 1028. Besides, in A.D. 1027, we find him in England conducting his profligate intrigues with the Norwegian jarls against their king Olaf, which he followed up in the next year by his expedition to Norway. Considering all these things, it seems necessary to suppose some error in Wippo, which deranged the Benedictine chronology (Bouquet, X. CX. LVI.), which, in its turn, has misled succeeding writers.

by strong castles, belonging to princes and great barons, who did not disdain to augment their revenues by the plunder of the pilgrim and the merchant.

Canute,[1] during this journey, truly rendered himself a benefactor to mankind, for, generously employing the wealth which he had amassed in England by very doubtful means, he not only enriched numerous churches, but relieved multitudes of poor persons, while his bounty penetrated into the prisons, and softened the lot of such as were there bound. In the interest of trade, moreover, as well as of pilgrims, he negotiated with the authorities whose position enabled them to exact immoderate tolls from travellers into Italy, and by the payment of large sums of money, either entirely redeemed or greatly diminished the customary dues.[2] His piety, though savage and unenlightened, was probably sincere. The consciousness of much guilt lay heavily on his mind, health and strength were failing him, and the things at which he scoffed a few years before, now assumed the character of terrible realities. Like the rest of his contemporaries he was possessed by the belief that heaven lay in the keeping of the priests and monks, and, therefore, when he entered churches or monasteries, buildings which in those times were thought to belong not to the general body of believers, but to the mere servants and ministers of the altar, he bowed, humbled himself, beat his breast, and above all things made immense presents of gold, silver, and precious stones to the guardians of the Fanes.[3] For years he had been in the habit of bestowing munificent presents on the clergy both at home and abroad, ostensibly to aid them in repairing and adorning their churches, but in truth to purchase that vicarious sanctity in the efficacy of which all classes believed. With this view he lavished costly gifts on the sanctuaries of St. Omer, Namur, Chartres, and, during

[1] Ex Chronica Willelmi Godelli. Bouquet, X. 263.

[2] Bouquet, X. 263. See Ducange *voce* Pedagium.

[3] Encomium Emmæ, II. 493.

his pilgrimage to Italy, exhausted the wealth of England in feasting, enriching, and conciliating the commanders, so to speak, of the ecclesiastical outposts which defended the approaches to Rome.

Whether or not any violent attempts were made against the person or riches of Canute, the Chroniclers omit to explain; but from certain passages in his letter to the English nation, describing the successful earnestness with which he had insisted on the demolition of those dens of robbers by which continental roads were beset, we are almost justified in believing that the pilgrim king had to make his way into Italy with arms. On his arrival at Rome, he excited the astonishment of the Sovereign Pontiff, as well as of all the princes and nobles there assembled, by the splendour of his magnificence. Superstition had, in fact, induced him to carry into Italy the spoils of England to be lavished on the church. He gave much to his Holiness, and promised more. Upon the emperor also he bestowed kingly gifts,[1] and, by the profusion of his liberality, succeeded in impressing upon the Romans a lofty opinion of English opulence, which has never since, I believe, died away.

Fortunately for the effect of his donations, Canute still preserved in his manners and character much of the fierceness of the Viking. Though his notions of God were narrow and rude, he still felt it is towards him alone that princes and other men are to be humble. In the midst of imperial and regal devotees from all parts of Christendom, he angrily chid the pope for his simoniacal avarice,[2] which led him to extort from the archbishops of England, who came to demand the pall, large sums of money, which might be regarded as the purchase of their sees. Overawed by the terrible Dane, his Holiness promised that such transgressions against the spirit of the Gospel should not be repeated. Canute next proceeded to deliver from taxation the school established

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1031. [2] Historia Ingulphi, I. 60.

for the benefit of English students at Rome; and, in order the more easily to obtain these concessions, agreed to secure to the Roman pontiff all those advantages which he had been accustomed to derive from England.[1] Having fulfilled his mission at the Eternal City, and received splendid presents from the emperor and other princes, he took his leave of the pope, and journeyed towards Denmark, where the state of public affairs demanded his presence.

It occurred to Canute, or his advisers, that it might be prudent to communicate some account of his movements and intentions to the clergy, nobility, and people of England; and hence his famous Letter,[2] forwarded to England by Living, abbot of Tavistock, which reveals to us so many curious particulars concerning the manners and modes of thinking prevalent in the eleventh century.

Though pervaded by a profound respect for justice and the laws, Canute's letter, nevertheless, breathes throughout the spirit of a despot. He insists that what is right shall be done, not simply because it is right or conformable to law, but through dread of the punishment that must follow disobedience. In a tone of manly contrition, he regrets the crimes, errors, and excesses of his youth, and expresses his firm resolve to govern thenceforward more humanely and justly. His language implies, however, that because he himself is reformed, he looks for the same reformation in others. He tells the clergy, the nobles, and all other administrators of the law, that he expects his orders to be strictly obeyed, under pain of his heavy displeasure. He commands the exact discharge of all dues: plough alms, the tithe of animals born in the year, the Peter's pence due to Rome, whether from cities or villages, the tenth of the harvest usually paid in August, and the first fruits of seeds at the feast of St. Martin. Thus it appears that Canute felt no

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1031. William of Malmesbury, II. 11. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1031.

[2] See the entire document in Historia Ingulphi, I. 60.

inclination either to emancipate the Church of England from Rome, or to diminish the means by which that Church itself was sustained.

On Canute's return from Scandinavia, he undertook an expedition into Scotland, whose kings or chiefs he is said to have reduced to obedience.[1] But war had now ceased to be his favourite employment. To conciliate his subjects, both Danish and English, he adopted the practice of the old Saxon kings, and traversed his dominions in all directions,[2] accompanied by princes, nobles, courtiers, chaplains, secretaries, and a strong detachment of his huscarls, who seem occasionally to have created no little confusion in the districts through which they passed. Whether the king feasted at the hall of some great earl or thane, or in the refectory of some opulent monastery, his retinue, too numerous to be entertained and lodged in any one establishment, were distributed among the towns and villages in the vicinity, in the houses of the wealthy clergy, thanes, or churls. Here they often got drunk, *more majorum*, made bargains in their cups, and terrified their effeminate hosts by their boisterous and ferocious manners, their swords and battle-axes being ever at hand, gleaming over the festive board.

It has been seen that from a very early period of his reign, Canute took measures for winning over the clergy and the monks, by erecting and lavishly endowing churches and abbeys,[3] by co-operating in the translation of bones, and being present at episcopal feasts. Occasionally, his liberality may have been spontaneous and genuine, as when he constructed the dyke and causeway, ten miles in length, from the monastery of Ramsey to that of Medeshamstede. Both he and his family appear to have greatly delighted in the morasses of Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire, and once, when his children and

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1031.
[2] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 441.
[3] See Codex Diplomaticus, VI. 179, 185, 191, &c.

domestics were proceeding in a ship from Medeshamstede to Ramsey, they were overtaken by a storm, during which several of the passengers lost their lives. To prevent such disasters in future, Canute, it is said, commanded his huscarls to mark out with their swords[1] and skeins a ditch, leading directly from one monastery to the other; and this having been excavated and cleared out by multitudes of labourers, to receive and carry off the waters, an elevated causeway, carefully paved with stones, was constructed along it.[2] Our ancestors, who entertained peculiar ideas of the picturesque, seem to have loved to reside in fenny districts, encircled by bogs and swamps, and widely-spreading meres. It was not simply, therefore, through the desire of security that the monks took up their abode in such places as the "Ram's Isle," lying in the midst of dismal black pools, approached over tremulous quagmires, and rendered verdant by bulrushes, reeds, and thick groves of alders and wild ash.[3] Here, having little else to do, they applied themselves to a contest with nature, driving piles into the soft earth, and carting thither immense quantities of sea-sand[4] and stones, by which a firm entrance was made into their boggy paradise. In some respects their taste is not to be disputed; for as they loved eels and all other kinds of fish, they could hardly have selected a spot more abundantly supplied with these luxuries. About the unhealthiness of the air they seem to have cared little, since the soil was rich and productive, and where laid out on soft level meadows was sprinkled thickly, in spring-time, with flowers. Gardens were by degrees created in the morass, with orchards and cornfields; so that the jovial monks, pecularly addicted to the good things of this world, had always at their com-

[1] Hence called Swerdes-delf. Camden, Britannia, p. 424.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1033. Camden, Britannia, p. 422.

[3] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 385.

[4] With which the roads in Lincolnshire are still commonly made. Archdeacon Churton, Early English Church, p. 257.

mand an abundance of fruit and grain wherewith to regale themselves and make merry in the refectory. Near at hand lay the clear and beautiful lake of Wittlesmere,[1] six miles long, by three in breadth, fringed all round with trees, reeds, and flags, and abounding so profusely with aquatic birds and fish of all kinds, that although the fishermen and fowlers incessantly plied their crafts night and day, the abundance of the supply seemed never to be diminished.

One of the favourite resorts of Canute, for religious purposes, was the monastery of Ely, whither he was once proceeding, on the festival of the "Purification of the Virgin," when he heard, from the deck of the vessel on which he stood with his queen and nobles, the chant of the monks, who had already commenced the service of the day. Sweetly across the waters it came to him, and so great was his delight, as monastic traditions love to relate, that, standing up in the midst of his courtiers, he burst forth into an improvised song, which down to a late period continued to be sung in chorus by the people. His pleasure may have been genuine, but the verses in which the monks suppose him to have expressed it, are obviously apocryphal. When his galley approached the shore, the brethren formed themselves into a procession, and, as they always did when honoured by the presence of a princely or noble visitor, escorted him to the minster. In severe winters he was sometimes prevented, by the frost and snow, from joining in the solemnities of this festival, till, having been probably accustomed to sledging in Denmark, he bethought him of the practicablity of traversing the frozen lakes and ponds in a carriage. Even then, however, the difficulty was not entirely removed. In rainy winters the Ouse, the Nen, the Grant, the Welland, and other rivers of the fens, overflowed their banks, until, like Egypt during the inundation, the whole country was submerged, and appeared like the sea, save that here

[1] See Ducange, voce *mara*.

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and there the leafless trees showed their heads above the flood. When frost suddenly set in, the whole of this immense surface was soon converted into a sheet of ice, over which it was thought so dangerous to travel, that Canute, in spite of his sledge, hesitated to trust himself upon it, till a huge clumsy fellow, named Brihtmer Budde, from one of the neighbouring islands, volunteered his services, and preceding the king's sledge, to the great astonishment and admiration of the multitude, conducted the regal devotee safe to Ely.[1]

The few remaining years of his life passed without any remarkable achievement. Premature old age had come upon him, and in his fortieth year[2] he sank into the grave, and was buried at Winchester,[3] leaving those extensive dominions, which his genius and policy had held together, to fall asunder, and form separate kingdoms as before. To his son Sweyn he gave Norway; Denmark he bestowed on Hardicanute; while to Harold Harefoot, his son by the beloved Elfgiva, of Northampton, he destined the crown of England.[4]

Of his character it is not easy to form a just estimate. Some virtues, no doubt, he possessed, but they were so intermingled with vices that they seldom resulted in any benefits to mankind. Dazzled by his success or overawed by the power he exercised, historians are prone to dwell on his greatness and magnificence.[5] He

[1] Historia Eliensis, III. 505.

[2] Heimskringla, II. 364.

[3] Annales Wintonienses, Anglia Sacra, I. 290.

[4] This point has been much disputed, but Simeon of Durham states the fact distinctly:—"Haraldum vero . . . regem Anglorum constituit." De Gest. Reg. Angl., p. 179. Conf. Hist. Rames., III. 447.

[5] The reader may desire to examine the testimony of those who entertain a more favourable opinion than I do of Canute. Dr. Lappenberg, II. 201, observes: "We perceive in him, if not a ruler to be compared with Charles the Great, yet a conqueror who was not hated, and under whom the people were probably happier than they had latterly been under their native sovereigns." Dr. Hook having instituted a comparison between Canute and Alfred, somewhat indeed to the advantage of the latter, goes on to say, "After his accession to the throne, Canute became a changed and altered man. He not only valued and promoted the blessings of peace, but in his humility

certainly subdued many kingdoms, England, Denmark, Norway, and part of Sweden; in war he was successful, in peace crafty, plotting and restless; in negotiation, dissembling and perfidious. But I can discern in nothing he did or said proofs of a great and noble mind. Unscrupulous to the last degree, he used the dagger unsparingly in clearing his way to the throne, and being seated there, shed blood without mercy upon the slightest alarm. History has not even preserved a list of his assassinations, which are thrown confusedly before our minds without order or details. We only know that to excite the least suspicion in his breast was to incur the penalty of death. The men he employed to destroy his enemies or rivals, he afterwards butchered, ostensibly from a mock sense of justice, but in truth to deliver himself from the presence of his bloody instruments.

In domestic life he tasted of no happiness, but was exposed to much humiliation and disgrace. His first English mistress, a lady of noble family, is said to have palmed upon him the sons of a cobbler and a priest; his Norman wife, penurious, heartless, and superstitious, converted her union with him into a means of amassing treasure. Friends he neither had nor deserved to have. Even after his death, Nemesis never forsook his House. The name of his only daughter was blighted with the infamy of adultery;[1] his sons, real or reputed, regarded each other with deadly hatred during life, and debased themselves by gluttony, drunkenness and most ignoble acts of revenge. In utter scorn and contempt, therefore, did his rule and family in England expire; and if

and unostentatious piety presented an example of Christian excellence to his subjects," Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, I. 478. The author of the Historia Ramesiensis (III. 437) had previously maintained that "Cnuto Rex Christianissimus nulli prædecessorum suorum Regum comparatione virtutum vel bellica exercitatione inferior." It may perhaps have been pardonable in the monk of Ramsey to laud the benefactor of his monastery, but I have shown that Canute's principal crimes were perpetrated after the period at which he is supposed to have become an altered man.

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 12.

he himself be remembered as a powerful prince, his name is never recalled with pleasure, nor does the whole record of his life kindle one generous emotion or suggest one noble thought. The piratical spirit of his ancestors dominated him from the cradle to the grave. The effects of his reign on the condition of England were in a high degree calamitous. No doubt he put an end for a while to civil war, but it was by extinguishing every spark of the spirit of independence. Most of the great Saxon families were impoverished or destroyed, while the Danish and Franco-Danish elements were lavishly introduced into English society to the extreme deterioration of its political character. The connexion with Normandy, begun by Ethelred, was continued and strengthened by Canute, who now on terms of amity, now of enmity, with the piratical dukes, contributed in both relations to complicate the interests of the two countries.

Between the Saxons and the Normans, though descended from one original stock, there was a natural antipathy, to which time and the circumstances of vicinity only added fresh force. With the Danes it was altogether different. The Normans were only a recent offshoot from the Scandinavian stem, who still cherished Danish manners, and in some parts of the duchy—as for example at Bayeux—sedulously cultivated the language of the mother country. The jealousies existing therefore between the Danes of England and the Danes of France were only such as could not fail to arise even between brethren where property and dominion were at stake. In Neustria they had trampled the French element into the earth; in England they sought, but vainly, to attain the same result. It probably entered into the policy of their leaders to aim at swamping Saxon influence in church and state, by entrusting the high places of both to men of Scandinavian blood. Canute took a queen from Normandy; Robert the Devil took a duchess from

Danish England; but what was intended to be a connecting link proved a cause of discord. Entangled by the voluptuous fascinations of Arlette, Robert insultingly sent back the Danish princess, and prepared to follow this rash step by another still more decisive. He had hitherto, like his predecessors, despised the pretensions of his nephews, Edward and Alfred, and suffered them to vegetate in neglect at the Norman court; but now, his own vindictive passions being roused, he fitted out an expedition against England, ostensibly for the purpose of asserting their claims to its sovereignty. But his will was capricious as his passions were short-lived. Weary of his wife, weary of Arlette, weary of his quarrel with England, he made the accidental detention of his fleet, by contrary winds, a pretext for abandoning the enterprise, and his weak and ill-balanced mind yielding to a new influence, he adopted the habit of a pilgrim, visited the Holy Land, and perished in his attempt to return to Europe. But his bastard son, inheriting at once his dukedom, his pretensions and his policy, and gifted with indomitable tenacity of purpose, constituted himself the heir of his uncles, the sons of Ethelred, and never for one moment lost sight of the idea till he stood as a conqueror on the heights of Hastings. Thus we perceive the close connexion between Ethelred's folly, Canute's grasping ambition, and the extinction of the Anglo-Saxon dynasties, which, by their weakness and pusillanimity, had forfeited the respect and power bequeathed to them by great warriors and legislators, by Penda and Alfred, and left to the heroic son of Godwin the task of closing their career with glory.

CHAPTER XV.

DANISH SOVEREIGNS OF ENGLAND.

Upon the death of Canute, the affections of men throughout the kingdom were much divided, there being no less than four competitors for the throne: Harold, the bastard son of Canute; Hardicanute, his son by Emma; and Edward and Alfred, the two sons of Ethelred, then living as exiles in Normandy. To determine between the pretensions of these princes, a Gemót of the Witan was assembled at Oxford,[1] where the whole subject appears to have been fairly debated. Leofric, earl of Mercia, with many others among the nobles and clergy, advocated the claims of Harold, laying no stress upon the fact that he was the offspring of a concubine, or on the scandal circulated by Emma's partisans that he was the son of a cobbler.[2]

On the other hand, Earl Godwin[3] and the nobles of Wessex, who, as Englishmen, dreaded the perpetual ascendancy of the Danish party, contended for the restoration of the House of Cerdic, and treated the marriage settlement of Canute with Emma by which the crown was secured to his offspring by her, as null and void, the royal authority in England being elective, or, in other words, depending on the choice of the Witan

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1036. (Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1035), confuses the whole subject, affirming that the kingdom was divided by lot.

[2] Yet this report is countenanced by the National Chronicle.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 12.

in Gemót assembled. But the influence of the lord of Bosenham was not yet firmly established. Though backed by all the thanes of Wessex, he was borne down in the national assembly by Leofric, earl of Mercia,[1] who carried along with him all the nobles of the northern provinces, together with the citizens of London and the commanders of the mercenaries by sea and land.[2] Driven from his first position, earl Godwin next suggested a compromise by which Wessex should be secured to Hardicanute,[3] then absent in Denmark, while all England north of the Thames, including the metropolis,[4] should be made subject to Harold Harefoot, the bastard son of Canute by Elfgiva, daughter of Elfhelm, earl of Northampton.[5] By his conduct on this occasion Godwin drew upon himself the deadly hatred of Harefoot, to avoid the immediate effects of which he retired, with the queen-dowager and the treasures bequeathed to her by the late king, to the ancient palace of the sovereigns of Wessex, at Winchester.[6] There, as regent of the kingdom for Hardicanute, and at the head of the West Saxon army, he administered the affairs of the realm exposed to the suspicions of the absent prince, and to the machinations of Harefoot and his courtiers.

While the nobles, both Saxon and Danish, were engaged in these factious intrigues, murmurs of civil war diffused extreme terror among the people. Having enjoyed under Canute nearly twenty years of tranquillity, they dreaded the renewal of those devastations which had ushered in his reign, and looked about in consternation for some place of security. Over what happened elsewhere in the realm time has drawn a veil, though some idea of it may be formed from what took place in Mercia,

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 276. Henry of Huntingdon, p. 758.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1036.
[3] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 179.
[4] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 932.
[5] Chronica De Mailros, I. 156. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1035.
[6] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1036.

where the inhabitants, in crowds, forsook their homes, and with their children and moveable property poured tumultuously into the fens and sought a refuge within the walls of Croyland Abbey. Ignorant, ill-bred, and superstitious, they immediately threw the whole monastery into confusion, thronged the chapels and cloisters, interrupted the accustomed services, and by their importunities for assistance, so tortured the ears of the abbot and his brethren that they voluntarily remained prisoners in their dormitories, whence they would scarcely descend to perform mass or the still more important duties of the refectory, though the wine, the Welsh ale, and the plentiful supplies of almond milk[1] for which the establishment was celebrated, were, no doubt, consumed above.

Some of the incidents of this irruption of the peasantry assumed a comic aspect. At Pegeland, a short distance from the monastery, there existed a small dependent establishment, where, surrounded by obedient clerks, lived Wolfsy the anchorite. His pretensions to supernatural knowledge now brought upon him severe punishment; night and day the imbecile fugitives beset his cell to consult him about their present difficulties and future prospects, and so incessant were the clamours and importunities of this multitude that, through sheer vexation and weariness of existence, the hermit put a bandage over his eyes to conceal from himself, perhaps, the winning looks of the children and the beauty of the women, and in this state was led away to Evesham, where[2] far from noise and temptation, he ended his days.

Harold Harefoot and his advisers, perceiving that the country was full of alarm and disaffection, and that the higher clergy especially withheld their support from the new king, hastened to get all things in readiness for

[1] Historiæ Croylandensis Continuatio, I. 498.

[2] Historia Ingulphi, I. 61.

the coronation: probably in London, since Winchester, which has been supposed by some modern writers[1] to have been the scene of the transaction, was the capital of his brother's kingdom, and the residence of his enemy Godwin, who lived there in discontent and suspicion, surrounded by his huscarls. Being summoned to officiate at the ceremony, the primate, Ethelnoth,[2] who, as the subject of Hardicanute and the friend probably of Emma and Godwin, disapproved of the election of Harold, repaired to the cathedral, and, in a somewhat ostentatious manner, refused to perform the act of consecration. Had his refusal been meant otherwise than as an insult, he might have declined being present at all; but, with a view to damage the new king's authority, he stood forth in the midst of the dignified clergy and nobles of the realm, and declared, with an oath, that he would consecrate no other man king while the sons of Emma survived, to whom alone he owed allegiance. They were, he said, committed to my care by Canute, and them only will I serve. He then took the crown and sceptre, which habitually remained in the custody of the archbishop of Canterbury, and laying them reverently on the great altar, declared to Harold that he neither gave nor refused them to him, but that, by his apostolical authority, he forbade any of the bishops of England to crown or bless him.

Of what followed, different accounts have been transmitted to us: some maintaining that Ethelnoth persisted in his refusal,[3] notwithstanding the threats and promises of the king, who, according to them, was either never crowned at all, or owed his consecration to the more flexible disposition of Eadsy,[4] Ethelnoth's successor;

[1] Dr. Hook, Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, I. 486.

[2] This prelate, descended from a noble family, obtained, through his conduct and course of life, the surname of "the Good." Stephen Birchington. Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury. Anglia Sacra, I. 5.

[3] Encomium Emmæ, II. 496, but this author is so full of prejudice and partiality, that we must receive his testimony with caution.

[4] Dr. Hook, Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, I. 490.

while others relate that Ethelnoth at length relented, forgot his allegiance to Hardicanute, and placed the diadem of England on the head of Elfgiva's son.[1] Much hostility appears to have existed between Harold and a portion, at least, of the clergy. By these he is represented as a pagan, and they relate that during the celebration of divine service, he habitually went forth with hound and horn, to chase the deer in the forests,[2] preferring the barking of dogs and the wild echoes of the rocks to the chanting of liturgies and solemn anthems. As the English were still a religious people, this greatly augmented his unpopularity with all those over whom ancient manners exerted any influence. There are not wanting those, however, who speak of him as the benefactor of monasteries, and say that many advantages were expected to be derived from him, had not his days been cut short; and they add, in support of their opinion, that he bestowed his magnificent coronation robe of silk, inwrought with flowers of gold, upon the Abbey of Croyland, where it was converted into a cope,[3] in which the mass-priest decorated himself when officiating on festival days before the high altar.

The principles, in conformity with which the kingdom was divided, have not been explained; but the Witan would appear to have conferred upon Harold supremacy over his brother of Wessex. Reluctant to exercise subordinate authority, or preferring the wild and boisterous life of the Northmen, or else cherishing for Harold a hatred which rendered it impossible to share the crown with him, Hardicanute resisted all the importunities of Godwin,[4] and his mother Emma, to return to England.[5]

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 932. "Dictus Haraldus, qui secundum quosdam ut regnum legitimo suo fratri Hardeknouto in Dacia regnanti custodiret, in regem esset erectus et ab Ethelnodo Dorobernensi Archiepiscopo apud Londonias consecratus."

[2] Encomium Emmæ, *ubi supra.*

[3] Historia Ingulphi, I. 61, 62.

[4] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 932.

[5] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1035.

In whatever motive it originated, his policy became the source of endless calamities to his country, since it was evidently his absence that first suggested the practicability of a Norman invasion. The position of the queen-dowager was anomalous and painful. In possession of Canute's treasures, which were rather public than private property, and guided by the wisdom and experience of Godwin, who exercised in Wessex the functions of viceroy, she appeared formidable to Harefoot, who, to lessen the danger he apprehended, seized a portion of the wealth[1] which had been left in her keeping by his father, an act not so much of tyranny as of prudence, since he might reasonably suspect the uses which would be made of such resources. But the estrangement already existing between the court of Winchester and the court of London was by this proceeding necessarily increased.

The connecting links of the events of those times have in many instances not been supplied to us; and, therefore, instead of being lighted on our way by knowledge, we are often left to the doubtful guidance of conjecture. After suffering the English princes to languish for twenty years in obscurity and insignificance, the rulers of Normandy now discovered that some advantage might possibly be derived from their pretensions to the English throne. The organisation and action of conspiracies are necessarily involved in mystery, which sometimes continues to envelope them even when the motive to concealment no longer exists. We are consequently unable to decide how far the designs of the Norman Bastard and his advisers coincided with those of the court of Winchester. That they were not entirely unknown to Godwin and Emma seems clear; and yet it is difficult to believe that the great earl extended to them his support, since by so doing he would have run

[1] Radulph de Diceto (p. 472) says he took "partem meliorem." See, also, Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 932, and Henry de Knyghton, p. 2325.

counter to the policy of his whole life, which was to impart unity, concentration, and predominance to the Saxon element in England.

Edward, the elder of the two princes, undertook the lead of the first expedition,[1] which, instead of being directed against the dominions of Harold, the declared enemy of his family, menaced the territories of his brother Hardicanute. A desire to confer with queen Emma was the pretext put forward; but a fleet of forty ships,[2] with a large force armed and equipped for war, could hardly be needed for so pacific a purpose. When, therefore, the Norman armament became visible off the coast, the West Saxons rushed to arms, and drew up along the shore to dispute the disembarcation of the invaders. Who led the men of Wessex is not stated; but it seems obvious that had the viceroy favoured the

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1036, who confuses the whole transaction, making Edward and Alfred arrive in England together, and describing the former as remaining with his mother at Winchester, while the latter is captured and slain, after which Emma sends back her eldest son in haste to Normandy. The "Metrical Life of the Confessor," written while Norman influence was predominant in England, presents us with a still wilder narrative. The author, ignorant of the whole course of events, jumbles things together in the most confused manner; first, he informs us that the princes were with their grandfather, who had been dead forty years; second, he calls Alfred the elder, in which, though wrong, he has many other Chroniclers to support him; third, he transposes the expeditions of Edward and Alfred, and supposes the latter to have come first, "with a mighty force of vessels;" fourth, instead of being repulsed from Sandwich, he makes Godwin meet him there, and "kiss, embrace, and play with him," as if he had been a child; fifth, having disposed of Alfred, whom, he tells us, Godwin seized and sent to Harefoot, he goes on to speak of Edward, as "debonair, wise and *valiant*," the "youngest of all his brothers," whereas he was born in 1003, and Hardicanute, probably, in A.D. 1018; sixth, Harefoot is represented as king of Denmark, which, in reality, had fallen, together with Wessex, to the lot of Hardicanute. But it would be lost labour to enumerate all the errors of this libel on Godwin, the testimony of which is worthless when the writer has the slightest temptation to make a false statement; yet it is a fair sample of the works in which the House of Godwin is calumniated. Mr. Luard's Translation, p. 190, sqq.

[2] Higden (Polychronicon, III. 277), who imagines that both brothers came together — and, in truth, Alfred may have been in his brother's fleet—says, they brought along with them a large body of Norman troops.

project of Edward, such a movement on the part of the inhabitants could hardly have taken place. Still, through the gallantry of the Norman knights in Edward's train, and the adventurous valour of their followers, a landing was effected at Southampton. The impolicy, however, of the enterprise soon became manifest; instead of being received with open arms by his countrymen, the Normanised son of the "Unready," speaking a foreign language, and surrounded by foreign troops, was regarded as a public enemy, and resolutely resisted. Irritated at the non-recognition of his claims, the prince commenced operations as in a hostile country, and attempted to force his way towards Winchester. At first, the hasty levies of peasants were put to flight, and Edward let loose his Normans upon Hampshire to indulge in the luxury of massacre and pillage. Rendered expert by long practice, the soldiers speedily succeeded in amassing large quantities of booty; but their triumph was of short duration, for after setting fire to several villages and perpetrating all such atrocities as were customary with their nation, they were driven back in confusion to their ships, in which they effected their escape. The contemporary Norman historians maintain that Edward's army, after gaining a glorious victory, suddenly relinquished the enterprise, a consolation which the unsuccessful often afford themselves.[1]

Harold, who could not remain ignorant of this expedition, perceived clearly that no small danger threatened him from the Continent; since, if Wessex were wrested from Hardicanute, the tide of revolution might roll on and overwhelm his own portion of the kingdom. He, therefore, contemplated with solicitude the events which were taking place in Wessex, where both the viceroy and the queen-dowager were objects of extreme suspicion to him. He already, moreover, foresaw the practicability of extending his sceptre over the whole island, and,

[1] Guil. Pict. in Duchesne, p. 178.

in the absence of his half-brother, almost deemed the southern provinces his own. Yet he seems to have been fully aware of the existence of plots in favour of the sons of Ethelred, whose partisans, though few, made up by superior activity for the paucity of their numbers. By these, Alfred, the Etheling, was instigated to make an attempt upon Kent, and he was not slow in responding to their wishes.[1]

Collecting a fleet and army, partly in Normandy, partly in Flanders, he appeared suddenly off Sandwich.[2] But time had reconciled the people to their Danish sovereigns, and the sons of the "Unready," even if they had not been personally forgotten, were not much calculated to awaken national enthusiasm. In spite, therefore, of the number of his ships and troops, which is admitted to have been considerable,[3] he met with so warlike a reception, that judging it imprudent to risk a battle, he sailed away, rounded the North Foreland, entered the Thames, and disembarked near Canterbury. Here he was met by earl Godwin, who, avoiding the road to London, conducted the prince and his retinue to Guildford,[4] on their way to the head-quarters of the queen-dowager. Alfred and his attendants were hospitably entertained, and, after feasting and drinking late, retired to rest.

In the middle of the night a detachment of Harold's army, probably Danes, burst suddenly into Guildford, and finding the prince and his followers asleep, easily

[1] Encomium Emmæ, II. 497.

[2] Matthew of Westminster (A.D. 1036) says, that Alfred came with twenty-five picked ships, full of armed men, in order *peaceably* or, if need were, by force of arms to recover his father's kingdom, which he imagines belonged to him of right, though the Witenagemót had solemnly declared that no descendant of Ethelred should ever reign in England.

[3] Guillaume de Poitiers (Guizot, Memoires, t. xxix. p. 326) says, that he was better prepared to succeed in his expedition than his brother Edward had been. Edward crossed the sea with forty ships and a corresponding army, so that we must infer the forces of Alfred to have been truly formidable.

[4] Encomium Emmæ, II. 497.

made them prisoners. The barbarities which followed were shocking and detestable. The Normans and Flemings were divided into unequal parts by lots, one-tenth being devoted to slavery, and nine-tenths to massacre. Simple death, however, was judged too merciful a fate for the invaders. They were maimed, mutilated, scalped, disembowelled,[1] and tortured in the most hideous manner,[2] after which Alfred was bound, hurried to London, and thence to the Isle of Ely, in the very centre of Danish influence.[3] There he was brought to trial before base and corrupt judges, and condemned to lose his eyes. Ambition is seldom merciful towards competitors, and Harefoot was not the man to set an example of magnanimity. Alfred had attempted to hurl

[1] See in Higden, Polychronicon, III. 277, a description of the hideous punishment.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1036. In one manuscript only is the guilt of this crime attributed to the earl of Wessex. The narrative is given in a metrical form, and may be regarded as a fragment of those ballads which constituted perhaps, in most instances, the basis of the prose chronicle. By a well-informed contemporary it could not have been written—indeed, it ought perhaps to be looked upon as one of those spurious imitations of ancient ballad records which abounded under the Norman princes, and were designed, in some instances, to insult the English, in others, to reconcile them to their foreign masters by disseminating false ideas of the state of the country which preceded the last conquest, and of the great men by whom it was governed or defended. The writer having commenced a prose statement flies off suddenly into verse—or, rather, grows weary of the attempt to convert the ballad into history—and, instead of giving a prose version, contents himself with quoting his original. At all events, the story he tells is as follows:—

"But Godwin him then let,
And him in bonds set;
And his companions he dispersed;
And some divers ways slew,
Some they for money sold,
Some cruelly slaughtered,
Some did they bind,
Some did they blind,
Some did they mutilate,
Some did they scalp;
Nor was a bloodier deed
Done in this land
Since the Danes came,
And here *accepted peace*."

This phrase shows either the ignorance or the wilful falsehood of the writer; for the Danes, instead of accepting peace, crushed the opposition of the whole nation, and acquired dominion over the country by war. Hoveden (A.D. 1036) throws these events into inextricable confusion, likewise attributing the massacre to Godwin, and putting a crown to his errors by relating that Emma sent away Edward to Normandy, for that until then he had remained with her.

[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1036.

him from the throne and take away his life, and having fallen into his power, could hardly expect to be treated with leniency. His vengeance, however, might have been satisfied with blinding his adversary; but fearing lest his miserable condition might excite pity, he put an end to his life, in the hope, probably, of deterring Edward from again engaging in a similar enterprise.

So far this tragical occurrence is susceptible of explanation; but a host of Chroniclers regarding it from a Norman point of view,[1] have endeavoured to involve the great Saxon earl of Kent and Wessex in the guilt of Harefoot. In order, however, to interpret human action at all, we must assume that men habitually act in conformity with their character, and that what constitutes that character is the system of their principles. Godwin from the beginning of his career gave evident tokens of great ambition, which led him to unite his fortunes with those of the Danish king, whom he could not but prefer before Ethelred. Yet even in this situation he exerted all his efforts to enhance the glory and consolidate the power of England. With the death of Canute died his affection for the Danes. It was, in fact, rather a personal attachment than a national predilection. He was a Saxon in heart and mind, and as soon as events rendered it practicable, exerted all his immense influence to restore the sceptre to the family of the great Alfred. He now occupied a most perilous position. The eyes of Harold, of Leofric, earl of Mercia, and of all the Danish leaders and partisans throughout the kingdom were upon him. He stood at the head of a diminutive minority which was decreasing in strength every day. For reasons which will make themselves evident as we proceed, he enjoyed no great favour among the monastic orders, which have in nearly all ages attached themselves to the winning side.

[1] Guillaume de Poitiers, William's chaplain, and evidently giving expression to the virulence of his master's feelings, apostrophises the great earl in his grave in a tone and temper worthy of a Mohawk. Memoires, &c., t. XXIX. p. 327.

He was compelled, therefore, to rely for support, perhaps for the preservation of his life, on the fidelity of the West Saxons, and the men of Kent, who, however, in opposition to the rest of the population, could hardly have proved successful in the event of open conflict. Accordingly, during Harefoot's reign, Godwin, notwithstanding the greatness of his abilities, played no distinguished part, but remained in sullen grandeur, almost like a banished king, at Winchester. The monkish chroniclers who wrote after the fall of his heroic son at Hastings, paid their court to the Norman princes by calumniating the overthrown dynasty. To effect this more completely, they travelled back to the great Harold's father, whom they made the hero of a thousand ribald tales. His real offence was, that he sought to guard against the evils which he foresaw would inevitably come upon England if the Normans were suffered to acquire the lead in its councils, or influence and property in the country.

This conviction was the keystone of his whole life, and led to the commission of an error which tarnished all his glories, blighted the prospects which his surpassing genius had opened up before him, and gave rise to that vindictive hostility which, diffused and permeating through a thousand channels, has infected the whole body of English history as far as his name and fame and family are concerned. This error was the raising of Edward the Confessor to the throne, which he did when the young man, timid and helpless, was completely in his power. Had he not been swayed by strong feelings of attachment for the old Saxon line, he would then have done what his dauntless son afterwards did. But his conscientiousness overmastered his ambition. He held the crown of England in his hands, and might have put it on any head he pleased—on his own, had he thought proper, yet he waived the tempting advantage, set aside the most favourable circumstances, and preferred before himself a trembling un-

Saxoned Saxon, merely because he regarded him as his lawful prince. If this overruling principle of loyalty guided his conduct then, when through his boundless popularity he might have risen to the throne of England without a crime, why should he now have committed one of the most hideous atrocities recorded in history, not only without temptation or any rational or intelligible motive, but merely, as it would seem, for sport?[1] If history is to go on repeating calumnies which imply contradictions so palpable, it will supply but little real instruction to succeeding times. Pretended evidence is indeed brought forward to criminate Godwin in the matter of Alfred's murder. But what is this evidence? The affirmations of men who lived hundreds of years after his death, or Norman libels, or ballads written no one knows when, by whom, or under what influence.

Unsuccessful attempts at restorations generally contribute to strengthen the hands of the princes whom they are intended to overthrow. This was the result of Alfred's enterprise; for the Witan, alarmed at the designs obviously entertained in Normandy against the throne of England, and offended by the indifference of Hardicanute, declared Harold king of all England.[2] To account for such a proceeding we must adopt one of two hypotheses: either that the son of Elfgiva of

[1] The reason assigned by some chroniclers for Godwin's supposed animosity towards Prince Alfred is truly pitiable. Desiring to unite his daughter Editha with one of the sons of Ethelred, and discovering that Alfred thought contemptuously of the connexion, he fixed his eyes on Edward as the more simple and manageable, and slaughtered his elder brother to make way for him. Such is the notion of Ranulph Higden, Polychronicon, III. 277. But as Alfred, instead of being the elder was the younger brother, the astute suppositions of the chronicler fall to the ground. Higden, removed by many generations from the period of which he was writing, could only speak in the language of others; the author of the Encomium Emmæ, who wrote within three years of the massacre at Guildford, and had conversed with several of those who escaped, knew of his own knowledge, and he says that Alfred was the younger of the two princes, "Alfridas minor natu." Scriptores Rerum Danicarum, II. 497. See also Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 401.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1037. Saxon Chronicle, eodem anno.

Northampton possessed a much greater share than is commonly supposed of the affections of the people, or that serious apprehensions of danger from Emma's Norman kindred were already entertained by the statesmen and nobles of England.

When queen Emma learned the unhappy termination of her son Alfred's attempt to dethrone Harold, she felt the imminent danger of remaining any longer in England, exposed to the vengeance of the king. Calling together, therefore, the nobles of Wessex,[1] among whom, it is to be presumed, Godwin was one, she took counsel with them secretly, and it was agreed that her safest course would be to fly the land. With the utmost practicable despatch, a ship was got ready, and though the winter storms had set in,[2] which, to the frail barks of those times, rendered the navigation of the Channel highly perilous, Emma set sail, and arrived safely in the dominions of Baldwin earl of Flanders, popularly denominated "the Friend of the English." By this prince she was hospitably received; the castle of Bruges[3] was assigned to her as a residence, while the revenues of that wealthy city were appointed for her support. Properly to estimate this act of munificence, it must be remembered that Bruges was then the centre of a flourishing commerce, which drew together within its walls merchants and strangers from all parts of Europe.[4]

Being now in complete safety, Emma, still ambitious and restless, despatched a messenger to her son Edward in Normandy, urging him to visit her at Bruges without delay. Indolent as he was, he obeyed the summons, and performed, we are told, the journey on horseback. But there his energies failed. No persuasions of his mother could prevail on him to undertake a second expedition to England, where the feelings of the nobles were completely alienated from him and his race. No

[1] Encomium Emmæ, II. 499.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1037.
[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1035.
[4] Encomium Emmæ, II. 499.

very cordial affection seems ever to have existed between Emma and this son, whose want of enterprise probably increased the alienation. They parted, therefore, in no friendly mood, and while he returned to the society of ecclesiastics in Normandy, she concentrated her attentions on her only remaining hope, Hardicanute, king of Denmark. With him her machinations were more successful. Quitting his dominions on the Baltic, he repaired, with ten ships, to Bruges, to concert with his mother an armed invasion of England, and a fratricidal contest for the throne.[1] The queen-dowager's treasures, whether brought from Wessex or supplied by Baldwin, seem to have been still considerable, since they proved equal to the enlistment, pay, and maintenance of a large army, and a fleet of sixty ships, which were collected in the ports of Flanders for a descent upon England in the spring.

Meanwhile the bastard prince, of whose real character and behaviour we know scarcely anything, was hastening towards the grave. His death was preceded by a disastrous irruption of the Welsh, who traversed the marches, and fought a successful battle in Mercia, where Edwin, brother of Leofric the earl, together with many other nobles, was slain. A great wind, also deemed worthy of mention in the National Chronicle, burst over England,[2] though of its effects nothing is related. Then Harold Harefoot died, March 17th, A.D. 1039, at London, Oxford, or Exeter.[3] Wherever he died, he was buried at Westminster; and the Witan, having hastily assembled, sent an embassy, consisting of many nobles and clergy, to invite over Hardicanute and his mother from Bruges.[4] This act of precipitation and folly had scarcely been committed, ere the most bitter repentance followed. Hardicanute, who seems never to have been

[1] Encomium Emmæ, II. 500.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1039.

[3] Florence of Worcester names London; the Saxon Chronicle, Oxford; and the metrical French life of Edward the Confessor, edited by Mr. Luard, V. 484, says he died at Exeter.

[4] Hist. Rames. III. 447.

quite sober, joyfully quitted the hospitable roof of Baldwin, and, with his numerous Danish followers and Flemish mercenaries, hastened to glut his evil passions in England. The mass of the people, incapable of foresight, and entirely ignorant of his character, gave tokens of immoderate joy at his arrival and coronation. But their gratulations were short-lived.[1] The youthful tyrant, influenced by his cruel and vindictive mother, obviously crossed the sea with strong feelings of rancour and vengeance in his heart, which were not likely to be assuaged by the consciousness of his own effeminacy and lack of courage, which, during four years, had induced him to acquiesce in his exclusion from the kingdom of Wessex.

Hardicanute's reign commenced with a base and flagitious act of vengeance, which gave the people to understand what treatment they might reasonably expect from its perpetrator. He commanded earl Godwin, Elfric, archbishop of York, Stor, the master of his household, Edric, his steward, Thrond, captain of his guards, with other men of high rank, to proceed to London, drag forth the body of Harefoot from its regal tomb in Westminster, and, after decapitation, cast it into a ditch,[2] whence it was transferred to the Thames, where, having floated about for some time, it was discovered by a fisherman[3] and delivered to the Danes residing along the river, outside the city wall, who buried it in their church of St. Clement's,[4] in the Strand.

The English nation was soon made to feel, that worthless as Harold might have been, their new master was still less to their liking. Ferocious and stupid, Hardicanute

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1039.

[2] Simeon Dunelmensis, p. 180. Twysden, in his Glossary, explains the word gronna, into which the corpse is said to have been first thrown, to mean "locus palustris," a marsh or bog. In the present instance it probably signified the city ditch, whence it may have been washed into theThames. Chronica de Mailros, I. 156.

[3] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 276. Johannis Fordun Scotorum Historia, III. 688.

[4] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 933. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1040. William of Malmesbury, II. 12.

resolved to treat England as a conquered country, and always kept near him the Danish fleet and army, by the terror of which he ruled. To maintain this mercenary force in full vigour, he imposed an oppressive tax upon the whole of England.[1] The collective amount was immense, since it was intended to enable him to pay eight marks to every rower, and twelve to every steersman in his fleet. He had now touched the nation in its tenderest point—his popularity vanished like smoke, and was succeeded among the English by universal detestation.[2] In some counties it was found impossible to levy the tax at all, while scarcely any consented to pay the full amount.

To enforce the king's orders, his huscarls,[3] or body-guard, were sent all over the country to collect the money. At Worcester, the iniquity of the exaction roused the people into insurrection: they resisted the king's officers, and drove them by violence to take refuge in one of the abbey towers.[4] But even the right of sanctuary failed to afford protection to those hated ministers of the Danes; the gates of the minster were forced —the populace broke into the tower, and chasing the huscarls to an upper chamber, slew them there.

When news of this affair reached Hardicanute, his fury knew no bounds. Nothing less would now satisfy his vengeance then the extermination of the people of Worcester, and all the chief nobles of the realm[5] were ordered to lead an army into the territory of the Whiccas, and waste it with fire and sword. In the command of this desolating force, earl Godwin, with many other

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 276. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 180, 181. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 933. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2326.

[2] The author of La Estoire de Seinte Ædward, v. 535, sqq. falls into great perplexity in his attempt to relate these circumstances. He fancies that Hardicanute raised an English army to combat his Danish troops!

[3] Vide Ducange in voce *Huscarla.*

[4] Florence of Worcester, Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1041.

[5] Florence of Worcester, Matthew of Westminster, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1041.

prudent and humane nobles, was associated, and, therefore, it was not to be apprehended that very strict obedience would be yielded to the king's orders. They advanced towards Worcester with extreme slowness, thus affording the citizens ample time to provide for their own safety. Winter, however, was coming on, so that their flight was attended by no little difficulty and hardship. Bearing away with them as much as they could of their property, many of the citizens dispersed and fled into distant parts of the country, while the remainder passed over to Beverege, an island in the Severn, where they threw up strong works, and resolved to defend themselves. Some few, more stubborn or confiding then the rest, remained in the city, and were cut off, probably by the ferocious huscarls, or taken prisoners, and, as the custom of the time was, sold into slavery. The place was then delivered up to sack and plunder during four days, after which it was set on fire, and by the light of its flaming homesteads the royal army, laden with booty, marched away.[1]

All Hardicanute's triumphs were over his own people, individually or collectively. Having taken vengeance upon the inhabitants of Worcester, he next directed the shafts of his wrath against its prelate, who, in conjunction with earl Godwin, was accused by Elfric, archbishop of Canterbury, of complicity in the execution of the pretender, Alfred, and his associates. To obtain money, of which Hardicanute contrived to be always in want, appears to have been the sole object of these proceedings, for having kept the bishop out of his see during a whole year, he restored him for a sum of money. In the plunder of the Church he was not, however, without a participator, since the intriguing and worldly-minded Elfric[2] obtained the revenues of Worcester during the suspension of Living.

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1041. De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 180, 181.

[2] See the character of this prelate in Anglia Sacra, I. 472, 702. Simeon

The accusation against earl Godwin[1] was neither urged nor passed over with so little earnestness; he was regularly brought to trial before his peers, and in accordance with the forms of Saxon law, solemnly maintained his own innocence. But his affirmation, considered by itself, would have availed him little. A man so placed was required, in order to clear himself, to find twelve persons, his equals in rank, to come forward and join their oaths with his. Godwin appealed to the Witan, and nearly all the nobles and thanes in England voluntarily became his compurgators,[2] and before God and their country solemnly acquitted him of the crime laid to his charge. The decision of this grand inquest was looked upon as altogether satisfactory by his contemporaries, and ought, in common fairness, to have prevented the Chroniclers of after ages from repeating the accusation without giving at the same time the testimony of the Great Council of the realm by which it was treated as false and calumnious. The whole transaction was obviously a political struggle, the Danish party attacking, and the English party defending, the illustrious earl of Wessex, the great hope and bulwark of the Anglo-Saxon cause.

It was customary at stated periods for subjects of rank to conciliate the friendship of the sovereign with costly and magnificent presents. Godwin, the richest as well as the noblest man in England, in conformity with this practice bestowed upon Hardicanute a splendid galley, which excited the admiration of his contemporaries, and has been ever since celebrated by historians. It appears to have been a superb model of naval architecture, ornamented at the stern with a gilded lion, while from the prow a golden dragon, the symbol of Wessex, projected with expanded wings and forked tongue over the waves.[3] Above fluttered a purple sail,

[1] Compare Higden, Polychronicon, III. 277.

[2] Matthew of Westminster. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1040.

[3] For this description we are chiefly indebted to the life of Edward the Confessor, edited by Mr. Luard, p. 397. The beautiful MS.

on which, in gorgeous emblazonry, were represented the achievements of his forefathers by sea and land. It was manned by eighty warriors, armed and equipped in the most gorgeous style of the times, with golden bracelets flashing on their arms, and weapons of the rarest workmanship and materials. A Danish battle-axe, inlaid with gold and silver, was slung from the left shoulder; in their right hand they bore a Saxon atagar, or spear, while their heads were adorned with gilded helmets. Forty gilded shields, locked rim within rim, extended in flashing blazonry along the ship's bulwarks on either side, so as, in the words of an old Chronicler, to conceal the steel beneath the gold.[1]

Hardicanute had one sister, Gunhilda,[2] by some praised for her beauty, by others for her wit and accomplishments. After the necessary negociation, her hand was bestowed on Henry,[3] emperor of Germany. The king and his courtiers vied with each other in the splendour of their gifts to the departing princess, whom they encumbered with gold, silver, jewels, gorgeous silken garments, and magnificent horses.[4] When proceeding towards the sea-shore to embark for the Continent, the nobles of England formed themselves into a procession, and accompanied her to the beach, with so great a display of pomp and grandeur that the poets were warmed into song, and the lays they composed on the occasion passed into the popular literature of the country, and were long afterwards sung in hostel and tavern. Nay, even in Norman times the English, delighting to recal the splendour of their ancient kings, employed

of this Chronicle was presented by George II. to the public library of Cambridge University. Compare Florence of Worcester, 1040.

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 12.

[2] La Estoire de Seinte Ædward, V. 506. Vita Edwardi Confessoris, p. 395.

[3] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 434.

[4] English horses were so much sought after on the Continent, that in order to retain a sufficient number in the country to mount the cavalry, and carry on the labours of agriculture, a law was passed as far back as the reign of Athelstan prohibiting their exportation except as presents. Dooms of King Athelstan, 18.

actors and minstrels to represent at banquets, with instruments and song, the festivity and joyousness of these imperial nuptials.[1]

The Chroniclers have converted the life of this princess into a theme of contradiction and mystery, some relating that being accused of adultery, her reputation was put to the hazard of single combat—that her champion, a dwarf, slew the champion of her accusers, a giant—and that refusing to be reconciled to her husband, she became a nun.[2]

But if the king and nobles could thus indulge in pomp and ceremonies, the condition of the nation generally presented a disastrous contrast. We obtain, however only casual glimpses of the real state of the kingdom, through doubtful and obscure traditions. Hardicanute appears to have been wholly unable to restrain the mercenary force of Flemings and Northmen, which he had brought along with him, and through sheer impotence let loose upon the country. By these miscreants, the horrors of Sweyn's invasion seem to have been acted over again. Unchecked by authority of any kind, they spread themselves over the land, entering at pleasure into private dwellings, convents, and monasteries, violating matrons and virgins,[3] and indulging in indiscriminate ravage, plunder, and massacre. Exaggeration there may be in the accounts transmitted to us, but it seems perfectly credible that very great misery was the result of introducing these lawless hordes into England. To illustrate their thorough recklessness, the quaint Chronicler naïvely observes, that decrees or privileges from Rome they valued not an apple, and its sen-

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1041.

[2] Bromton, p. 933. Lappenberg, following other authorities, says she died in Italy two years after her marriage, II. 220. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 277.

[3] Dames e gentiz puceles,
De cors e de face beles
Des Daneis sunt desparagées
E viument de lur cors traitees.
Estoire de Seinte Ædward, V. 570, sqq. To the same effect Knyghton: —Defloraverunt uxores nostras, et filias, et ancillas, p. 2326.

tence or absolution they valued not a button.[1] Now these, in the absence of law and legitimate authority, being the only restraints upon the wills and passions of barbarous populations, the extinction of their influence was almost equivalent to the entire subversion of social order. Accordingly, the state of things then existing bordered on the aphelion of civilisation. Infant and matron, monk and hermit, canon and clerk, abbot and bishop, they cut off or drove out of their dwellings in sport. Gentlemen they hanged, that they might take peaceable possession of their estates; ladies whom, in their caprice, they exempted from murder or violation, they robbed of their money and their palfreys, and, to crown their contemptuous insolence, tore the rings from their fingers and the garments from their bodies. Through these achievements of his soldiers, Hardicanute is said to have felt himself complete master of all England.

But nations, however humiliated by conquest, may yet, by the extremes of oppression, be stimulated to vengeance. Stung to the quick by insults and injuries the most galling, the English are said to have resumed courage and rushed to arms. The account of what took place, grudgingly doled forth like the intimations of an oracle, almost appears to be an echo of St. Brice's day. Under the command of a leader named Howne, who stood forth as the champion and avenger of his country, the English took the field in immense numbers. What was their system of operations, what battles they fought, what vicissitudes they encountered, we are not told; the Chronicler simply relates that they fell fiercely upon the Danes, made a vast indiscriminate slaughter, and thus delivered the greater part of the kingdom from their hated presence.[2]

[1] Privilege u escrit de Rumme,
Ne prisent vailant une pumme,
Sentence u absoluciun,
Ne preisent vailant un bittun.
Estoire de Seinte Ædward, V. 558, sqq.

[2] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2326. The obscurity of this passage has hitherto deterred historians from extracting out of it one of the most curious events of Hardicanute's reign. But one of the lives of

We must not, however, deny to Hardicanute the possession of any good qualities. He was weak, intemperate, and diseased; but won the affections of his courtiers and the praise of the monks, by the profuse feasting in which he indulged with his companions. Four times a day[1] did the tables of the palace groan beneath mountains of fat beef, while wine, mead, pigment, morat and cider, made the round of the board in flowing goblets. Nor were the poor forgotten, what remained of each repast, instead of being restored to the larder to be reproduced at the next meal, was carried forth in ample baskets, and distributed among the uninvited who thronged tumultuously about the palace gates.[2]

To share in these perpetual festivities, Hardicanute invited over his half-brother Edward from Normandy,[3] and not only entertained him hospitably as might have been expected, but proceeding beyond the bounds of common generosity, conceded to him royal honours, and associated him with himself in the government of the kingdom. Like a good son, moreover, he refused to be conscious of his mother's vices and failings, and treated her with the utmost kindness and respect. With his friends he mingled on terms of frank familiarity. If he invited them to share his banquets, he also consented to partake of theirs, and the cordiality with which he entered into their convivial enjoyments cost him his life. Osgod Clapa, a nobleman of distinction and opulence, having bestowed his daughter's hand upon a distinguished Dane, invited the jovial king to be present

Edward the Confessor, recently published, supplies what was wanting to render Knyghton intelligible, and gives, at the same time, a striking picture of the misery and degradation to which the English had been reduced by Hardicanute's mercenaries. *Lives of Edward the Confessor*. vv. 532, 580.

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 934. Henry of Huntingdon, p. 758.

[2] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 450, praises Hardicanute for his extreme kindness towards the poor.

[3] Simeon of Durham, p. 181. Malmesbury supposes Edward to have come over without invitation. II. 12.

at the nuptial feast, given at his house in Lambeth. This was the sort of field in which the son of Emma loved to display his royal presence. As a mark of honour, he was placed next the bride, and rising after deep potations to propose her health, while the acclamations that followed his speech were yet resounding through the hall, he fell back senseless, with the goblet still in his hand, and never spoke more.[1] Being incapable of prayer or confession, he died unhouseled, and, in the language of a fierce Fifth-Monarchy man, was huddled to dust at Winchester.[2]

[1] Simeon of Durham, 181. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 277. Historia Ramesiensis, III. 450.

[2] Sir Ralph Sadleir, Rights of the Kingdom, p. 67. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1042. Henry of Huntingdon, p. 758.

CHAPTER XVI.

RESTORATION OF THE HOUSE OF CERDIC.

THE way was now open for the return of the English princes, and the realisation of Godwin's policy. It is commonly supposed that Edward, the son of Ironside, then an exile in Hungary, was the true heir to the throne; but his father having been himself a bastard, and possessing no right, could transmit none to his children. No law of primogeniture existed; the Witan chose from the royal family the individual they thought best qualified to govern, and their suffrages, therefore, constituted the true right of the crown.

Edward, the son of Ethelred and Emma, who, as I have related, had been invited over from Normandy by his brother Hardicanute, and resided with him in the palace, was now thrown into extreme perplexity. He was not so much without ambition as without capacity. He had been engaged, directly or indirectly, in three attempts to recover the throne of England: first, when he landed with a Norman army in Hampshire, and disgraced himself by the atrocities he committed, before he was put to flight by the inhabitants; second, it was as much in his interest as in his own that his brother Alfred raised the standard of rebellion in Kent; and thirdly, it was in the assertion of his claims that Robert the Devil fitted out a fleet for the invasion of England, which, like the Armada of a later age, was dispersed and shattered by a tempest.

He was now probably about thirty-nine years of age,[1] and therefore, had his mind been capable of profiting by experience, might have been expected to act with prudence. But circumstances had co-operated with nature in disqualifying him for the English throne. He was partly by blood, and entirely by habits and education, a Norman. He spoke the French language, affected the French dress, had adopted the French form of Catholicism, and by all his associations, tastes, and predilections was estranged from England and the English. The lofty independent tone of Saxon thought displeased him; the language of the country was a stranger to his ears; to the demands of public business he was unequal, and he seems during his stay at Hardicanute's court, to have made no friends.

Accordingly, at that monarch's death, he found himself beset by difficulties, and even by fears, for his own safety.[2] Looking around him, he could perceive no ray of hope, save in the friendship and support of the great earl of Wessex, whose character the anti-Saxon party had already sought to blacken, by representing him as the betrayer of prince Alfred. Had Edward then put faith in this calumny, he would surely not have centred all his hopes in such a man, but, warned by his brother's fate, would rather have fled to any other individual in the realm for refuge. It may be presumed that Godwin had treated him with kindness and consideration in his days of dependence and obscurity, which suggested the hope that he would befriend him now. At all events,

[1] Lingard (I. 276) speaks of him as about forty; but as Ethelred and Emma were only married in A.D. 1002, he could not have been quite so old. The same historian consistently regards him as the elder brother, but on this point the Chroniclers are divided, some giving priority to his brother, and some to him. Upon the whole, it seems clear that he was the elder.

[2] According to the Annales Ecclesiæ Wintoniensis (II. 290), he repaired to Winchester, concealed in a plebeian garb, now hiding himself in the house of his mother, and now in that of the bishop, whom he afterwards accused of being her paramour. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2329.

when Edward stood friendless and dejected in the land of his forefathers, his heart and understanding equally prompted him to crave an interview with the great statesman, whose influence over the people was unbounded, and whose wisdom and eloquence irresistibly swayed, in most instances, the deliberations of the Witan.

Having, by messengers, obtained permission to wait on Godwin, Edward proceeded to his residence, and would have thrown himself at his feet, but that the earl kindly prevented him.[1] In the bewilderment of the moment, the ambition of his former years was lost sight of or skilfully cloaked by the policy of timidity.[2] He did not ask the earl's assistance to enable him to ascend the throne of his ancestors, but, whatever might have been his secret wishes, only petitioned for his protection and aid to enable him to return to Normandy.

The crown was now hovering over Godwin's own brow, and it would perhaps have demanded but few efforts to place it firmly there. Being, however, full of loyalty, he rejected the promptings of ambition, and explained to the royal suppliant that by the aid which he could afford, the sceptre of England might be secured to him. He further represented to him how much better it would be to reign here as a king than to wear out his life in inglorious exile in Normandy; he maintained that as the son of Ethelred he might claim the crown as his due; that he was now of ripe age to govern, and that the poverty and misfortune he had experienced, would the better enable him to sympathise with the misfortunes and poverty of others.[3] Thus soothed and cheered, Edward, in spite of his monastic

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[2] Lappenberg (II. 234) seems not a little perplexed by the attempt to form some idea of Edward's position at this time. Having observed that "England had repeatedly and recently refused him for its sovereign"—no proof of great attachment — immediately proceeds to say, that Edward was "strong in the love of his people," a rash assertion, hazarded for the purpose of disparaging the "crafty earl," meaning the great statesman and patriot of Wessex.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

simplicity, began to experience the force of a throne's allurements, and to take a more favourable view of his own prospects. Delivered from the apprehension of imprisonment or death, his gratitude knew no bounds, so that in the effervescence of the moment he was ready to undertake or promise anything.

The contrast presented by the two men at this moment was in the highest degree striking. Godwin, confident and majestic, with a countenance expressive of the loftiest intelligence, and the consciousness of all but supreme power, handsome, full of energy, and animated by indomitable courage; while Edward, with a face of feminine make, terminating in a flaxen beard, a slender and frail figure, with long white hands, so thin that the light appeared between the fingers, seemed the incarnation of weakness and indecision.[1] His will, therefore, bowed naturally before that of the earl, and he agreed at once to all the conditions upon which Godwin offered him the crown—namely, that he and his sons, whose earldoms extended over the better half of England, should regulate the affairs of the kingdom, and that he should take the beautiful, accomplished, and noble Editha to be his queen.

Some idea may be formed of the education and manners of women in those ages by the account which has been left us of the earl of Wessex's daughter, Editha,[2] of whom all the Chroniclers, whether friendly or hostile[3] to her family, speak with extreme admiration. In contrast with her father and brothers, she is regarded as a "rose among thorns." Brought up partly at home, partly

[1] Such is the description given of him by a contemporary writer, to whom his personal appearance was familiar. Lives of Edward the Confessor, p. 435.

[2] This lady is generally supposed to have been Godwin's only daughter; but Sir Henry Ellis (Introduction to Domesday, II. 78, 136, sqq.) has brought to light another daughter of the earl, Gunnilda, who became a nun at Bruges, who wore haircloth next her skin, and for many years before her death abstained from animal food and all kinds of dainty meats.

[3] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 938.

at the convent of Wilton, she displayed all the accomplishments and fascinations of an Englishwoman of the highest birth. To avoid associating with the crowds of gentlemen, bards, minstrels, and retainers who thronged the earl of Wessex's palace, she retired, like an eastern princess, to her mother's private apartments,[1] where she passed her time in reading or needlework. Of the exact nature of her studies we are ignorant, though she appears to have been familiar with Latin, rhetoric, and logic,[2] and with all those works to which the statesmen and theologians of the times had recourse for enlightenment. Her mind must, consequently, have been brimful of knowledge, both sacred and secular, while her manners and conversation were as distinguished for ease, vivacity, and grace, as her countenance and person were for beauty. Her complexion was dazzlingly fair, and her luxuriant tresses, flaxen tinged with gold, falling in massive ringlets over her neck and shoulders, imparted to her a seraphic aspect. Over the education of this daughter, Godwin, who excelled all his contemporaries in the art of developing the intellectual faculties, appears to have watched with peculiar fondness and care, so that she was deficient in nothing known or practised by her sex in those ages. In portrait-painting, in design, and in works of the most delicate embroidery, she is said to have surpassed all other ladies from the banks of the Bosphorus to those of the Thames.[3] Had Edward, therefore, been possessed of a prince's instead of a monk's character, he would have valued much less his elevation to the throne of England than the hand and love of this peerless woman, whose name sheds a lustre and a

[1] "Ubi non dissoluta ocio, nec onerosa, fastidio legere aut operari manibus consuevit, ornare miro artificio vestes, sericis, aurum intexere, quæque rerum imitari pictura; tali opere ac meditatione vitare lascivia, colloquia juvenum devitare." Ailredus Rievallis, p. 378.

[2] Historia Ingulphi, I. 62.

[3] See the picture drawn of her by the quaint metrical Chronicler, La Estoire de Seint Ædward, V V. 1147-1175. Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 378.

perfume over the whole of that period of English history.

The solemn compact between the earl and the prince having on both sides been confirmed by oaths, Godwin convened an assembly of the nobles and people at Gillingham, in his own earldom of Kent, and there, with his fervid eloquence, which is said to have been peculiarly English, as well in character as in language, so ably advocated the claims of Edward, that he was proclaimed king by acclamation, and received general homage. But, in an affair so momentous, Godwin did not rely exclusively on the art of persuasion. He had recourse to other and still more influential means; with some he prevailed by his authority, with some by appealing to their self interest; many readily acknowledged Edward's right, and the few with Danish predilections, among whom was the sheriff of Middlesex, Osgod Clapa,[1] who persisted in opposition in spite of justice and equity, were carefully marked and afterwards driven into exile.[2]

In the Norman account of this transaction, we discern the bloody glimmer of Hastings' field thrown backwards over events. The senate and people of England, instead of choosing freely their own king, in conformity with the laws and maxims of their forefathers, are swayed by the menaces of the Norman duke, who insinuates by his envoys that if they neglect his counsel they shall feel the weight of his arms.[3] Both the embassy and the threat are mere fictions. Had the stripling of eighteen, which William then was, sent so insolent a message, the great military chiefs, Godwin, Siward, and Leofric, would have treated his ambassadors with derision. Treachery and superstition had not yet

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1046.
[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.
[3] Guillaume de Poitiers, Memoires, XXIX. 336. This unskilful adulator has been compared by our neighbours to Sallust, whose genius and grandeur of sentiment should have preserved him from such an insult.

paved the way for this truculent foreigner to the English throne.

The interval between the election of Edward at Gillingham and his coronation, which took place at Winchester[1] on the Easter Sunday of the following year, A.D. 1043, was probably employed in familiarising the people with their new sovereign, and thus securing to him a certain amount of popularity. Among the Anglo-Saxons the ceremony of consecrating a king was conducted with much pomp. The archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops, the abbots, the priors, in their most gorgeous robes and sacerdotal ornaments, sparkling and flashing with jewels, thronged the interior of the cathedral, surrounded by all the chivalry and beauty of the land.[2] On the present occasion, Eadsy,[3] the primate who, already perhaps detected the approach of those dark shadows which soon after fell upon the English church, addressed to the sovereign a wise and temperate discourse on the duties of a prince,[4] and the assembly probably hoped that the words of the sacred counsellor would in time bear good fruit. In this belief the tide of public rejoicing rose high, and overflowed the whole kingdom: monastery and palace, mansion and cottage, indulged in feasting and revelry, during which the Danes, it is said, who could not be expected to share the general joy, concealed themselves in their houses, while they were mocked at and insulted[5] in rude and boisterous dramatic exhibitions. The third Tuesday after Easter, which obtained popularly the name of Hokeday,[6] was especially set apart for these scenic representations which,

[1] Saxon Chronicle. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1043. Henry of Huntingdon, p. 759. Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1042. Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 127.

[2] La Estoire de Seinte Ædward, V.V. 856, sqq.

[3] Ailredus Abbas Rievallis de Gen. Reg. Angl., p. 366. De Vita et Miraculis Edwardi Confessoris, p. 375 Bromton, p. 936.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1043.

[5] Spelmanni Glossarium, p. 294.

[6] Festivitas quam derisis ejectisque jam Danis Angli—ut exactis Regibus Romani, Fugalia (Ovid. Fasti., II. 685, sqq.)—annuè in lætitiam celebrabant. Spelmanni Glossarium, p. 294.

because they commemorated a great deliverance, took so firm a hold of the national mind, that they survived the greatest changes in government and religion,[1] and only died out at last with the extinction of all popular festivities.

To form a correct idea of their character may now perhaps be impossible. It would seem, however, that the performers, having divided themselves into two bodies, one representing the English, the other the Danes, engaged in a series of military evolutions and encounters, the cavalry, armed with lance and shield, commencing the action, in which the infantry soon took part. At first the opposing hosts manœuvred in ranks; but presently, breaking into platoons, they successively assumed the forms of squares, wedges, circles, and then deploying again into line, engaged in conflict. Twice victory seemed to declare in favour of the Danes; but ultimately, by large reinforcements of Englishwomen, the foreigners were defeated, made captive, and led away in triumph.

Many learned men have confounded the event thus celebrated with the massacre of St. Brice's Day,[2] though it seems manifestly to refer to the achievements of the English under Howne, which were synchronic with the close of Hardicanute's reign, and may perhaps only have been terminated a little before Edward's coronation.[3] In commemorating an anniversary, tradition is seldom at fault: the massacre took place in the beginning of winter; Hokeday occurring a fortnight after Easter, may

[1] See in Strutt, Sports and Pastimes of the English People, p. 148, a description of the festivities of Hokeday before queen Elizabeth, at Kenilworth Castle.

[2] Ducange, for example, *voce Hokeday*, maintains this opinion, and observes that even in his day the custom had not entirely died out in the Midland Counties.

[3] See the curious sections, 34, 35, in the Laws of Edward the Confessor, from which Spelman fairly infers that the operations against the Danes were completed in the commencement of his reign: "Nam irruentibus, instar turbinis, in ultionem Danis et rerum summa undequaque potitis eos denuò sic ejecit Edouardus, ut spem omnem redeundi ademit."

be said to have ushered in the rejoicings, great heats and long days of summer;[1] and, consequently, could never have been intended to keep alive the remembrance of an atrocity which was perpetrated at a different season of the year, and of which, with good reason, the English were rather ashamed than proud.

History says nothing of the part enacted by the women in the victories under Howne—it says only too much of their delinquencies at the period of Ethelred's massacre, which, instead of insuring to them the joyous mastery over their households, and suggesting their merry pranks in the streets, would rather have led to their clothing themselves in sackcloth and covering their heads with ashes, since their conduct, we are told, had been such that they were mercilessly mutilated and slaughtered with their paramours, while the children they had borne them had their brains dashed out against the posts of the doors. Forty years had effected a change in their characters, so that instead of siding with the enemies of their country, they gave such proofs of patriotic sentiments, that their representatives and descendants throughout the land endeavoured for ages to give perpetuity to the memory of their deeds. On Hoke Tuesday, they went forth, we are told, in joyous troops, throwing cords[2] across the streets of the towns and villages—the way, perhaps, in which they had co-operated against the Danes—drew passengers towards them, and extorted from each as ransom a small present, which was afterwards applied to pious uses.

But, notwithstanding the brilliance of these ceremonies, the dawn of Edward's reign was not propitious,

[1] Kennett, with overstrained ingenuity, derives Hokeday from the Saxon Headæg: "Quod Gallice dicimus, Haut jour; forte quod in æstivis diebus adeoque longioribus incidat hæc festivitas." Ducange, *ubi supra.* Compare Matthew Paris, A.D. 1255, 1258, and Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1261.

[2] Nam cum *hocken* idem sit Germanice quod obsidere cingere, incubare; alii in hac celebritate alios obsident, capiunt, ligant (præsertim viros fœminæ), atque inde, binding Tuesday, *i.e.*, Diem Martis ligatoriam appellant."

for then were sown the seeds of those calamities which afterwards shot up and overshadowed the whole of England. With the asceticism of a monk, he united an extraordinary degree of hypocrisy and dissimulation. In Normandy he had contracted all the vices of the Normans, a puerile fondness for the chase, servility to the Church of Rome, and the inordinate love of money.

The Master of Politics teaches, that favours too great to be repaid generally beget ingratitude. This was never more strikingly exemplified than by Edward, the son of Ethelred. He owed everything to Godwin, and therefore hated him. The presence of the earl reminded him of his dependence, and though in act he delegated the government of the kingdom to him and his sons, he constantly meditated in secret on the means of delivering himself from these friends, too powerful to be offended or patiently tolerated.

In this frame of mind he was artfully strengthened by the host of Norman favourites he had brought over with him, or who flocked to England immediately on his accession.[1] These individuals, grasping, selfish, unprincipled, laboured to alienate his mind from the English nobles, more especially Godwin, whose influence interfered with their mischievous designs. It was to these men, chiefly priests and monks, that Edward opened his heart; and as they were perhaps in the pay, and certainly espoused the interest of their own duke, we may discover, in this circumstance, one principal cause of the disastrous events that followed. Perceiving the king's weakness and superstition, they laboured to create in him the belief, consonant enough to his feeble frame and intellect, that the first of all human virtues is chastity, and insinuated that, by practising it perseveringly, he might raise himself to the level of the Saints. In conformity with their wishes, which were probably only those of William, expressed in monastic style, he bound himself, by the obligations of a vow, to perpetual chastity, so that

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

succession to the English sceptre might be thrown open to intrigue or arms. The influence of these sacerdotal flatterers appeared extravagant and ludicrous, even to the monks themselves, who relate contemptuously that, had Robert of Jumièges affirmed a black crow to be a white one, the king would have sooner believed his words than his own eyes.[1]

This may seem to be attributing to the rude priests and statesmen of those times too subtle a policy. Barbarism by no means paralyses the understanding, it only destroys the taste, the sense of beauty, the purity of sentiment, the refinement of manners. We may easily believe, therefore, that among Edward's favourites there were some who conceived the possibility of placing a Norman line of princes on the throne of England, and trembled lest the cohabitation of Edward with his queen should produce an heir to dissipate their ambitious dreams. Editha, though a wife in name, led in the palace the life of a nun, mocked by some, pitied by others, an object of aversion to her husband, who accumulated on her innocent head the hatred with which his foreign favourites had inspired him for her father and family.[2]

Nor did the rancour and malignity of these courtiers stop here. Having poisoned Edward's mind against his greatest benefactor and his wife, they proceeded to involve him in the guilt of persecuting and plundering his own mother. Some have sought to excuse this approximation to matricide by imagining a sort of struggle[3] between the parent and child; others palliate

[1] Si diceret nigram cornicem esse candidam, rex citius ori illius quam occulis suis crederet. Anglia Sacra, I. 291.

[2] See William of Malmesbury, II. 13. Speaking of Edward's treatment of his wife, Higden (Polychronicon, III. 277) observes, "quam taliarte tractabat, ut nec àthoro ammoveret nectamen virili more cognosceret, quod familiæ illius odio, an castitatis zelo fecerit compertum non habeo."

[3] "The first opponent with whom Edward had to struggle was his own mother." Lappenberg, II. 237. Hume quaintly apologises for Edward's behaviour to his mother, by observing "that he had hitherto lived on indifferent terms with that princess." History of England, I. 140.

the iniquity and baseness of the act by dwelling upon Emma's neglect of her son during his infancy, her marriage with his father's enemy, her cruel partiality for his younger brother, Hardicanute, and her parsimony in affording him pecuniary aid while he was in exile.[1] But these considerations, though not without weight, constitute no justification of Edward's conduct. A pious son, with a whole kingdom's resources at his command, would have spared his mother's grey hairs the shame and grief of being despoiled and hunted down by her own offspring.[2]

Edward was at Gloucester when the machinations of his foreign favourites blossomed and bore fruit. Suddenly, to the surprise of all persons, he ordered the earls Godwin, Leofric, and Siward, with a suitable train of attendants, to accompany him, and set out for Winchester[3] in the beginning of November. By royal ordinance, all the estates and manors of Emma the queen-dowager were confiscated and taken into the king's own hands; and on his arrival in the ancient capital of Wessex, her accumulated treasures in gold, silver, jewels, precious stones, and female ornaments, were taken from her. Many of the Chroniclers add, that she was accused of adultery with bishop Alwin,[4] and subjected to the fiery ordeal; but their narratives deserve no credit, having been apparently intended to

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1043.

[2] Edward's conduct was in this respect identical with that of Harold Harefoot, upon whom Emma had no claims either of affection or gratitude.

[3] Florence of Worcester, Saxon Chronicle, *ubi supra.*

[4] Henry de Knyghton gives this intrigue as the reason why the king deprived Emma of her treasures, p. 2329. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 277, agrees with him, but accuses Robert de Jumièges of poisoning Edward's mind against his mother as well as against Godwin and his sons; but to show how great was the confusion prevailing in his mind, he likewise accuses Godwin himself of being the calumniator. The Annals of Winchester, the authors of which may have possessed means of obtaining on such points information not generally accessible, relate that Alwin, having been deprived of all his possessions, was forbidden to leave the city on pain of death, I. 291.

account for Emma's liberality to the church of St. Swithun.[1] It was not thought becoming even by the pious Edward to remove his mother from sanctuary, and she was therefore suffered to remain in the minster, to be supported by the charity[2] of the clergy, which was seldom wanting to the unfortunate.

In the same year,[3] Eadsy, archbishop of Canterbury, weighed down by the infirmities of age, had recourse to an act of pious policy to secure to himself a worthy successor. He feared, with good reason, that should the election be deferred till after his death, some intriguing foreign priest, with abundant funds at his command would fly to Rome and purchase the preferment from his Holiness.

By his piety and virtue Eadsy appears to have gained the friendship of earl Godwin, through whose influence the king was prevailed upon to coincide with his views. Siward, therefore, formerly a monk of Glastonbury, and then abbot of Abingdon, was raised to the see of Rochester, and during the primate's illness, intrusted with the management of all secular affairs connected with the archbishopric. He lived not, however, to enjoy the honours intended for him, but after acting as the primate's coadjutor during three years, died in A.D. 1046, upon which Eadsy resumed the entire government of his see. The year before his death, A.D. 1048, he presented to the church of St. Augustine two superb silver-gilt chalices, and a psalter furnished with a glossary, which, that it might not be removed or stolen, was fastened by a chain to St. Gregory's altar. At the same time he contributed a hundred

[1] Annales Ecclesiæ Wintoniensis, A.D. 1043.

[2] Edward is said to have despoiled his mother so completely, that he did not leave her the value of a farthing. Anglia Sacra, I. 291.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1044. But I adopt the chronology of the Abingdon Chronicle, I. 451, which appears to be more consistent with the order of events. Eadsy, who had been chaplain to Harold Harefoot, was raised to the primacy in 1038, and died in 1049. Anglia Sacra, I. 5, 84, 86, 87, 227, 238, 790.

marks towards the building of one of the church towers.[1]

Meanwhile, England was threatened with another invasion from the Baltic States. Magnus,[2] king of Norway, had entered several years before into a treaty with Hardicanute, then king of Denmark, by which it was agreed, that whichever of these princes survived should succeed to the dominions of the other.[3] The crafty Norwegian now affected to regard himself as the true heir to the English throne by virtue of the above treaty, and notwithstanding the preposterousness of his claim, summoned Edward to relinquish the sceptre, menacing him with immediate hostilities in the event of his refusal.

Surrounded by great statesmen and brave commanders, Edward treated his menaces with disdain, and, to protect the shores of England from insult, fitted out a formidable Channel fleet, which rendezvoused at Sandwich.[4] Intelligence of these preparations reaching Scandinavia cooled the ambition of Magnus, who, fearing to engage in so mighty an enterprise, contented himself with assailing Sweyn, son of Canute, who had succeeded to the throne of Denmark. In such an emergency this prince looked naturally to England for succour, and sought to obtain from Edward the co-operation of a fleet of fifty ships. In the debate on this subject in the Witenagemót, the influence of Godwin, who strongly urged the policy of complying with the request of Sweyn, received the first shock. Leofric, earl of Mercia, doubtless incited and supported by the dissimulating king, opposed the departure of the fleet[5] upon the ground that it might soon be wanted to

[1] Chronologia Augustinensis, A.D. 1048.

[2] This king, who was aided by the Swedes in recovering his father Olaf's throne, reigned from the year in which Canute died to A.D. 1047.

[3] Heimskringla, II. 365. From Magnus's Saga, it is clear that the treaty regarded only Denmark and Norway.

[4] Mathew of Westminster, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1045.

[5] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum. p. 182; Higden, Polychronicon, III. 278.

defend the British shores. This insidious council prevailing, Denmark was abandoned to its fate. Sweyn, nevertheless, assembling the forces of his kingdom, gallantly encountered the superior armaments of Magnus, by whom he was defeated[1] and driven into exile, while his successful rival united the sceptres of both kingdoms. The imprudence of the policy recommended by Leofric soon appeared. Twenty-five Norwegian ships, under the command of Lothen and Irling, bent, however, on plunder rather than conquest, disembarked at Sandwich, sacked the town, and retired with immense booty in captives, gold, and silver.[2] But their attempt to extend their ravages over the whole of Thanet was defeated by the valour of the inhabitants. Thence they sailed to Essex, where, encountering little or no opposition, they spoiled the entire coast, and then sailed away to dispose of their plunder in Flanders.

During this part of Edward's reign, occurred many remarkable phenomena, which the Chroniclers relate with superstitious awe. The recollection of them was in fact engraven on the memory of the people by the wide-spread destruction they occasioned. Owing to the imperfection of agriculture, and the comparatively slight attention paid to commerce, the least irregularity of the seasons resulted in famine, which, though caused by their own indolence or ignorance, was habitually attributed to the anger of heaven. Immense spaces of undrained land emitted, during summer, pestilential exhalations, which gave rise to fatal epidemics; while, in winter, the humidity of the atmosphere, augmented by the prevalence of morasses, swamps, and forests, was converted into snow, which sometimes fell in quantities so prodigious as to crush the woods by their weight. The winter of A.D. 1046, is said to have been so tempestuous and severe that the birds perished in extraordinary numbers, while the fish were frozen to death

[1] Heimskringla, II. 394.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1046.

in the rivers and lakes.[1] As the spring came on, other portents betokening the anger of heaven were noticed. On Sunday, the first of May, occurred a great earthquake, which shook many cities of Mercia, and this was accompanied or followed by a strange mortality among men and other animals in various parts of the kingdom. That species of lightning, upon which the people of those days bestowed the name of wildfire, consumed numerous towns and corn-fields in Derbyshire, and many other parts of England.[2]

Edward the Confessor now became involved in the quarrel between the Emperor of Germany and Baldwin Count of Flanders. In one of those contests, perpetual among the Germans, the count had marched to Nimiguen, and burnt the imperial palace; and to revenge this affront the Emperor Henry the Third gathered together an army for the purpose of invading Flanders and subduing or expelling Baldwin. Possessing no fleet, and fearing lest his enemy should effect his escape by sea, Henry applied to Sweyn, who, after the death of Magnus in A.D. 1047 had recovered the throne of Denmark, and to Edward, king of England, to co-operate, by blockading the ports of Flanders. Both these princes consented—Sweyn, because the imperial alliance might be of use to him in his northern contests; and Edward, to gratify his revenge against Baldwin for extending hospitality and protection to those numerous exiles whom the troubles of the times had driven from England. Thither among others had betaken himself Osgod Clapa, who, leaving his wife at Bruges, collected a fleet of twenty-nine sail, with which he meditated a descent on England. Actuated by these motives, the English king drew together a formidable fleet at Sandwich,[3] which, however, the sudden pacification[4] between Henry the Third and Baldwin rendered unnecessary. The crews, therefore,

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1046.
[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1047.
[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1049.
[4] Chronica de Mailros, I. 157.

were in part disbanded; such of them as had been drawn from the several counties of Mercia received the pay due to them, and returned to their homes; of the Danish mercenaries, some, with the promise of a full year's pay, remained in the royal service, but the greater number having been paid off, returned to the more congenial practice of piracy on the high seas.[1] A few ships only were retained at Sandwich, while Godwin and Beorn sailed with the remainder to Pevensey. Despairing of accomplishing anything important against England, Osgod Clapa broke up his armament, and repaired with his wife and six ships to Denmark; but the commanders of the remaining twenty-three, unwilling to relinquish the profitable enterprise in which they had embarked, made a sudden descent near Eadulf's Ness, on the coast of Essex, which appears to have been always open to the assaults of an enemy, and then made to sea with considerable booty;[2] but being overtaken by a violent tempest, were all, save two, submerged beneath the waves.

No sooner, however, had the fleet dispersed, than intelligence was brought Edward of the landing above spoken of in Essex, upon which, too late, he issued orders to recal the ships he had sent away. Had Clapa's force, which has been sometimes estimated at thirty-nine sail, been a little more powerful and better commanded, Edward's precipitate policy might have cost England dear. But the Viking system was now falling to pieces of itself, so that the worst to be feared from it was a series of insignificant disembarcations and plunderings, from which the inhabitants of the coast were in general well able to defend themselves.

It was now judged time to deliver the nation from the odious and oppressive tax[3] imposed nearly forty years before by the bewildered Ethelred, for the purpose,

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1049. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 278.
[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1049. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1051.
[3] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1051. Chronica de Mailros, I. 157.

as was pretended, of carrying on war against the Danes;[1] but in reality either to buy peace from them, or to purchase their service as mercenaries. The Danish Conquest, which was, in part, the result of this policy, having deluged England with blood, had passed away, and the descendant of Alfred, who sat upon the throne, might, had he been possessed of ordinary virtue and intelligence, have imparted stability to Saxon rule. Gold and silver, under the appellation of Danegeld, filled his treasury to repletion, and among his counsellors, generals, and admirals were some of the ablest men to whom England has ever given birth. Of both these appendages to sovereignty he had secretly determined to rid himself. His friends, the monks, to furnish him with a motive quite in accordance with their ideas, gave currency to the fiction that on going one day into his exchequer, he saw, sitting upon the summit of a vast heap of gold, a diminutive devil, grinning and playing with the glittering spoils of the people. It was in the light, therefore, of abstinence from sin that the Confessor viewed the abolition of Danegeld:[2] but whatever may have been his incentive to the deed, the people had reason to rejoice, since the impost, however productive, instead of being expended in erecting national defences, was lavished profusely upon court favourites and ecclesiastics, who from France and Normandy poured in one continuous stream into England.[3] Some Chroniclers have attributed the remission of Danegeld to the violence of a famine[4] which raged at the time, laying low thousands, and filling the land with mourning; but in

[1] Ailredus Abbas Rievallis de Vita Miraculis Edwardi Confessoris, p. 383.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066, in connexion with this affair has a legend which represents the money to have been collected by Harold and his sister Edith for the purpose of clothing the royal troops and servants. When they took Edward into the treasury he beheld the devil, as already stated, seated on the money, and a dialogue ensued between the Confessor and the Fiend, which ended in Edward's refunding the money to those from whom it had been extorted.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[4] Historia Ingulphi, I. 65.

all likelihood the tax really gave way before the general discontent of the nation.

All men are guilty of transgressions, for which they deserve, and sooner or later suffer, chastisement. The Nemesis of the Godwin family, now began to exert her power and darken the horizon of the great earl. His sons growing up to be men, and acquiring immense wealth and influence, ceased to be guided by his wisdom. Their characters were strong, their passions violent, their pride and ambition without limit. In the actual condition of the kingdom, governed by a feeble monarch, surrounded by necessitous and avaricious foreigners, equally hateful to the nation and to them, their love of conflict was excited, together with the hope of extending their authority. In a state of things so open to vicissitude, everything seemed possible to youths of high courage, disciplined in arms, familiar with danger, eager for renown, and to the last degree prodigal of their lives.

Sweyn, earl of Hereford, whose territories lay principally along the marches of Wales, and who appears to have entered largely into the perplexed and sanguinary contests of the Principality, having accompanied Griffith in an expedition against the people of the South, rested on his return at the town of Leominster, where he saw, and became enamoured of, Edgiva,[1] the lady abbess. Monastic discipline had now become greatly relaxed, so that the ladies of the cloister were scarcely less solicitous to attract the gaze of men,[2] by the display of gorgeous dress and jewels, than women of the secular classes. The abbesses belonged usually to noble families, and being

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1049. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 273.

[2] Clemangis, a French theologian of the fifteenth century, quoted by Prynne, Records II. 229, and Hallam, Middle Ages, III. 303, draws a picture of convents, from which it may be inferred that they had faithfully preserved their character; "Quid aliud sunt hoc tempore puellarum monasteria, nisi quædam non dico Dei sanctuaria sed Veneris execranda prostibula, sed lascivorum et impudicorum juvenum ad libidines explendas receptacula? ut idem sit hodie puellam velare, quod et publicè ad scortandum exponere."

raised to authority in the earliest bloom of youth, were only rendered more attractive by the coquetry of the cloister, and the idea that they were forbidden.

For them and for the nuns generally, princes and nobles had in all ages of Anglo-Saxon history forsaken their wives,[1] and brought upon themselves the severest censures of the Church. To explain their peculiar attractions, we should probably take into account the fact that they were better educated than other women, and that the general regularity of their lives at once gave them greater health and freshness, and something of that delicacy of sentiment and manners which is fostered by early seclusion from the habitual society of men. Into their state and condition there entered much of what we term romance; their dwellings, built in picturesque and sequestered situations, almost necessarily awakened the poetry of their nature; they rose and wandered at night through their vast monasteries and churches dimly lighted up, perfumed with the odour of incense and thrilling with music; the Pleiades and the white dawn beheld them at their prayers, and therefore, till they yielded to the seductive influence of the world, they might be said to exist in the highest heaven of the imagination. To draw them down from thence appears to have been the aim of their secular lovers, over whom, at least while their youth and beauty lasted, they exerted an irresistible fascination.

The correctness of this view is proved by the story of earl Sweyn and the abbess Edgiva. Captivated by her beauty, and still more in all likelihood by her manners, he desired to make her his wife,[2] and exerted the utmost influence of his family to obtain what in modern phraseology would be termed a dispensation,

[1] See Bonefacii Epistolæ, *passim*.

[2] This is distinctly stated by Simeon of Durham. Speaking of his return from the north, he says, "Relicta prius Anglia eo quod Eggivam Leonensis monasterii abbatissam quam corruperat in matrimonium habere non licuerat." De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 183.

from the Witan and the king. But the act he had committed placed him in hostility with the Church; and all the opponents of the earl of Wessex[1] dexterously took advantage of this indiscretion of his son to shake the fabric of his greatness. Hemmed round by Norman ecclesiastics, with the savour of the Vatican about them, Edward may really have been persuaded to look upon Sweyn's love for Edgiva as a crime, which indeed it probably seemed to all those whose minds were dominated by Tibertine ideas. Of nearly all the incidents of this contest between earl Sweyn and the court we are ignorant, except that it terminated in his defeat: he was constrained to restore the abbess to her cloister; upon which, in a blaze of passion, he relinquished his vast domains, his honours, his power, and his golden prospects for the future, and threw himself as a homeless Viking upon the sea. Like all other English exiles he first repaired to the court of Baldwin, count of Flanders; but growing speedily weary of its tameness and inaction, sailed away for the stormier and more congenial North,[2] where the princes and nobles, his relatives, still entertained a strong leaning towards the piratical life.

It has already been related that on the close of the contest between Baldwin and the emperor Henry the Third, Edward lay with a portion of his fleet at Sandwich, whither intelligence was brought that a formidable band of pirates was ravaging the western coast. To oppose this new enemy, Edward had no one in whom he could fully confide but Godwin, the leader of the cabinet, the chief general on land, the most trusty admiral at sea. At the head of a squadron of forty-two sail belonging to the nation, commanded by himself, and two other ships the private property of the king, commanded by his sons Harold and Tostig, the earl sailed westward in search of the marauders, but was detained by stress of weather at Pevensey.

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 939.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1049.

At this juncture, earl Sweyn, disgusted with the life of a sea rover, or attracted irresistibly toward the land which held Edgiva, returned with eight ships[1] from Denmark to England, and cast anchor in the port of Bosenham, where his father possessed a castle, commanding in front a view of the sea, and backed by a semicircle of dense woods.[2] On his desertion of his earldom, on account of the abbess Edgiva, Edward had divided Sweyn's territories between his brother Harold and his cousin Beorn. To recover these he now proceeded to Sandwich,[3] where, having obtained an audience of the king, he pleaded his cause so eloquently, and made so many professions of loyalty,[4] that he would certainly have succeeded in his design had not Harold and Beorn, swayed more by ambition than by affection, opposed his just claims, and thwarted the king's clemency. In consequence of their cruel interference, the only boon granted the unhappy earl was a safe conduct for four days, at the end of which he was to leave the kingdom. Indignation and revenge now took possession of his mind, which became so clouded by passion that he almost ceased to be a free agent. With the thirst for vengeance torturing him at his heart, he stationed his eight ships on some point of the coast midway between Sandwich and Pevensey, and then proceeded to visit his father[5] at the latter port. Here he spoke with him, and as he appears to have been always his favourite son, easily obtained his forgiveness. Undermined by the Norman favourites, and thwarted even by the native nobles, Godwin no longer possessed his wonted influence with the king. On Beorn therefore devolved the task of reinstating Sweyn in the royal favour. Laying aside his former opposition, the youthful earl consented to act as his uncle directed, and left Pevensey with his dark

[1] Florence of Worcester. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1049.
[2] Camden, Britannia, p. 167.
[3] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2331.
[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 183.
[5] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 939.

and mysterious cousin. To understand the course which Sweyn now pursued, we must suppose him to have been so completely maddened by disappointed love, by the loss of his earldom, and by the humiliation of seeking through the influence of another what he could once have commanded by his own power, that he was scarcely master of his actions.

The earls, accompanied by their retainers, now rode eastwards in the direction of Kent, till they approached a point on the road opposite which the piratical squadron lay. Here Sweyn stopped short, and representing to his cousin that his seamen would desert him if he should any longer remain absent, begged he would accompany him to the beach, that he might show himself and speak to his followers. To this, Beorn consenting, they proceeded together to the shore, where, anchored at a little distance out at sea, rode the Viking fleet, from which, as they drew near, a boat put off and was rowed by a number of pirates towards the beach.[1] Sweyn now besought him to complete his kindness, by repairing with him on board. Beorn's suspicions were roused by this request; he began to discover the danger of his position, and strenuously refused, though too late, to comply any farther with his wishes; for ere he could take a single step towards effecting his retreat, the fierce mariners, at a preconcerted signal, seized, bound, and threw him headlong into the boat. Complete darkness covers all that followed. Whether the infuriated earl of Hereford subjected his unhappy cousin to torture or famine—whether he was exposed to the jeers and insults of brutal bucaneers, or cast, bound as he was, into some dark cell, must for ever remain unknown. From the general ferocity of the age, which seems to have reached its culminating point in Sweyn, we have but too much reason to fear that the sufferings of the youthful earl were great. They were, however, soon

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1046.

terminated, for on the arrival of the Viking fleet at Exmouth, he was hurried on shore and murdered. The body, according to one Chronicler, was cast into a ditch,[1] where a little earth was thrown over it. Another historian relates, what is very unlikely, that the assassins buried it in a church.[2] Wherever his remains were laid, when the news of his death reached London, his friends and lithsmen hastened to Devonshire, and taking up the body conveyed it to Winchester, where Beorn at length found a resting-place by the side of king Canute, his uncle. After this murder, Sweyn sailed away with part of his fleet—for six ships out of eight deserted him—to Flanders, where he was received by Count Baldwin with the greatest hospitality, and passed the winter at Bruges.

Much negociation and intrigue was meanwhile going on in England, over which the negligence of the Chroniclers has thrown an almost impenetrable veil. The nation was rapidly separating into two factions, one upholding the interest of Godwin, and the English; the other, that of Edward and his foreigners, while victory veered sometimes towards one party, sometimes towards the other. The main object of the king's government was to fill every great office in church and state with Normans and Frenchmen,[3] who already owned or commanded castles in several parts of the realm. At court, the Norman-French language had superseded the English, while all candidates for royal favour imitated the foreign courtiers in dress, manners, and speech. Immediately upon his accession, Edward had thronged his court with foreigners, among whom many were of high rank; these he enriched and loaded with honours, made his secret counsellors, and intrusted with every

[1] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1049.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1046. Bromton (p. 939) varies the narrative: "Corpus dicti Beorni ad terram de mari projectum amici sui juxta Kanutum regem avunculum suum apud Wintoniam humaverunt."

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

office of importance in his palace.[1] Whether open or disguised, the policy was vigorously in action which ultimately transferred the diadem of England from a native to a foreign brow. But though the process of denationalisation steadily advanced, there were side currents and back waters which diverged from the main stream, and appeared, from time to time, to be floating events into the old Saxon channel. The fight for honours and emoluments, carried on with equal fierceness by clergy and laity, and the additional force imparted to Roman influence, were only so many features of the struggle—the real contest lay between the native aristocracy and the strangers, who, with the king at their head, laboured to impress a foreign character upon English society, and to convert the dominions of his forefathers into a Norman dependency.

Most of the great ecclesiastical leaders of English predilections adhered to the House of Godwin, which it was already perceived must soon succeed to that of Cerdic. With its interests, with its honour, was bound up the nationality of England. By these patriotic churchmen, therefore, Edward was assailed in behalf of the banished earl—in spite of foreign influence his pardon was obtained—and Aldred bishop of Worcester was at length commissioned to proceed to Flanders, and bring home Sweyn in triumph to his estates, his earldom, and his country.[2] But all the incidents of the conflict were not of one colour. Upon the death of Eadsy archbishop of Canterbury, Robert of Jumièges,[3] who had already been made bishop of London, was appointed to succeed him. and immediately proceeded to Rome for his pall.

An Englishman, whose adventures are strangely mixed up with the story of those times, now comes upon the scene. This was Sparahawk, originally a monk of St. Edmondsbury, but for his extraordinary skill in the jewel-

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 399.
[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1049.
[3] Thomæ Rudborne Historia Major Wintoniensis, I. 233, 237. Annales Wintonienses, I. 291.

ler's craft, promoted to be abbot of Abingdon. He was through the influence of the popular party, recommended to the king, who apparently, without consulting his Norman favourites, appointed him to the bishopric of London. When the foreign primate, however, returned from Rome, he refused to consecrate the Saxon, who, making light of his authority, took possession of his diocese, of which for awhile he received the revenues, and conducted the affairs. For his hostility to the Saxon bishop, who repeatedly demanded of him the rite of consecration, Robert pretended a command from the pope, who, he said, had forbidden him to comply in this matter with the king's wishes. Ultimately the royal authority succumbed to the papal, and Sparahawk was driven from his diocese.[1]

An event shortly afterwards occurred which furnished the Confessor with a pretext for giving vent to the hatred he had long cherished in secret against the Godwin family. Among the foreigners who were now flocking in great numbers to England, came Eustace, count of Boulogne,[2] who had married Goda, Edward's sister. The visit, owing to this close connexion, was natural, and the favour and splendour with which he was received at the royal palace of Gloucester would have excited little attention, but for the circumstances which attended his return to the Continent. Whether any plan had been formed between him and his brother-in-law to involve the earl of Wessex in a quarrel with the court, and supply a pretext for his ultimate ruin, cannot be ascertained, though the course pursued by Eustace may possibly be thought to justify such a suspicion. Having taken refreshment at Canterbury, the count and his followers resumed their march towards Dover, and at about the distance of a mile from the town put on their breast-plates,[3] evidently contemplating mischief, and,

[1] Historia Monasterii de Abingdon, I. 463. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1051.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 279. Chronica de Mailros, I. 157.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1048.

riding forwards, entered the place fully armed and ready for battle.

They commenced their enterprise by seeking to force their way into private houses, and quarter themselves violently upon the inmates. This, as might have been expected, provoked resistance. One of the count's retainers, seeing a dwelling which pleased his fancy, attempted, without the least ceremony, to take possession of it, and wounded the owner, who, becoming infuriated, slew the insolent foreigner. This was the signal for a general assault and massacre. Confident in the superiority of their arms and military discipline, Eustace and his retinue immediately remounted their horses; and, galloping to the house of the Saxon gentleman, forced their way in, and slew him on his own hearth. Alarm and indignation spread through the whole town: the inhabitants rushed to arms; the streets were crowded with men, women and children; the foreigners on their war-horses, dashed furiously to and fro, trampling to death aged men, women and infants,[1] cutting down the citizens with their swords, or spearing them with their lances. Hearing the tumult and the shouting, the English soldiers who garrisoned the castle[2] seized their weapons and descended, in all haste, to protect or avenge their countrymen. Their presence decided the affray. Eustace and his Frenchmen, now the weaker party, were chased through the streets and lanes, their numbers diminishing every moment, till at length the count, with some few men, reached the open country, and saved their lives by the speed of their horses.[3] Forty dead bodies were left weltering in blood in the streets of Dover, besides the

[1] "Comes et sui nimis irati, viros, et mulieres, quam plures armis interfecerunt, pueros et infantes suorum pedibus equorum contriverunt." Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 184. William of Malmesbury (II. 13) confuses the whole transaction, and places the massacre at Canterbury. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 942.

[2] "Custodes Castelli Dovoriensis." Higden, Polychronicon, III. 279.

[3] They fled like cowards, is the expression of Florence of Worcester (A.D. 1051), after having trampled babes and children under their horses' hoofs.

number of old men, women and children who had been maimed or wounded, to show the sort of treatment which Edward's subjects had to expect from his foreign favourites and guests.

Lamentable, however, as this occurrence may have been in itself, it dwindles into nothing compared with the disastrous results of which it was the fount and origin. Count Eustace, who, strangely enough, was allowed by the other Kentishmen to pursue his way unmolested, retraced his steps to Gloucester, and there gave the weak and credulous monarch a false version of what had happened. Edward, enraged at the insult[1] which he believed to have been offered to his brother-in-law, sent for earl Godwin, in whose territories the massacre had taken place, and without the slightest inquiry or deliberation, commanded him at once to proceed to Dover, in a hostile manner, and punish those whom he thought proper to regard as delinquents.

Perceiving the king's mind to be swayed by foreign influence,[2] Godwin refused to obey, alleging that it was unjust to punish men before they had been heard in their own defence. He suggested that the officers of the garrisons, and the principal citizens of Dover should be sent for, and confronted with Eustace and his marauders; but instead of following this just course, the Confessor summoned the Witan at Gloucester,[3] in the hope of being thus enabled to satisfy his vengeance.

Events were now clearly tending towards a rupture between the House of Godwin and the king, who stood in his own dominions at the head of a foreign party, bent on perpetrating all the evil they could against the natives. The success of the English cause was inextricably knit with that of the earl of Wessex, who, therefore, con-

[1] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2331.

[2] "Ille (Godwinus) autem videns alienigenas apud regem prævalere, ac suos cives volens tutari respondit justum fore custodes castelli Doveriensis conveniri, qui si se possent explacitare, illæsi abirent; sin alias in rebus suis et corporibus regi et comiti satisfacerent." Higden, Polychronicon, III. 279.

[3] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 401.

sidered himself justified in employing all the arts of policy of which he was master, and even arms if need should be, to defend his country's liberties against a host of foes introduced into it, and intrusted with the command of strong positions, by its own sovereign. Fortune supplied Godwin with a pretext for gathering together an army, with which to insure freedom to the deliberations of the Witan, and overawe the turbulent Frank and Norman courtiers. The Welsh had recently made a successful inroad into Sweyn's earldom, and erected a strong castle in Herefordshire,[1] whence their foraging parties issued at pleasure to devastate and lay waste the surrounding country. It was ostensibly to put an end to these depredations, and drive their authors beyond the border, that Godwin and his sons now mustered their forces, and in formidable array approached the king's quarters. The great earl himself advanced at the head of the men of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and Wessex; the fierce and fiery Sweyn led those of Oxford, Gloucester, Somerset, Hereford, and Berks, while with Harold, already regarded as the Dauntless, came those of Essex, Cambridge, Huntingdon, and East Anglia.[2]

The army of the Godwins, encamped at Beverston and Langtree,[3] whence the earls sent to demand an audience of the king and the Witan, and be instructed in what manner to proceed in order to avenge the nation's disgrace. Their purpose may have been enigmatically expressed, but Edward was surrounded by shrewd interpreters, who filled his mind with apprehensions, and exasperated him against his best friends. Held in mental, if not in bodily captivity by his French and Norman courtiers, Edward hastily summoned to his aid Leofric, earl of Mercia, Siward the Dane, earl of Northumbria, and Radulph his own nephew, with their

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1048. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1051. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 942.

[3] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 184.

respective forces.[1] Godwin meanwhile pressed the king to deliver into his hands Eustace, count of Boulogne, and his accomplices, that they might be put to trial for the massacre at Dover. Edward procrastinated and equivocated till the northern earls came up with their contingents, when he answered the demands of Godwin with a peremptory refusal.

A civil war, in which the best blood of England must be shed, now appeared inevitable; the royal army entered Gloucester, burning with eagerness to engage the men of Wessex, whose leader, equally great as a statesman and a general, experienced the utmost reluctance to draw the sword against his son-in-law, and shed the blood of his countrymen. Learning, however, that a plan had been formed to assault his camp, he drew up his men in battle array, and stood on the defensive. To ward off the calamitous effects of such a conflict, Leofric,[2] earl of Mercia, interposed his counsel and authority; messengers and envoys passed and repassed between the two armies,[3] the flash and glitter of whose arms might almost be said to light up the intervening space, and a truce was at length agreed upon till St. Michael's Day, when the earl and the king were to meet in London and there settle their differences in a legal way.[4] To insure the observance of peace, hostages were given on both sides, as between public enemies; after which, Godwin and his sons, who had for once the weakness to put faith in their royal master, disbanded their followers, and returned to their respective earldoms. The impolicy of this proceeding was soon made manifest. Instead of following their pacific example, Edward, with all the chiefs who adhered to him, exerted his utmost influence to organise an overwhelming force, a design in which he succeeded but too well, so that, by the appointed day of Conference,

[1] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1051.
[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 185.
[3] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 943.
[4] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 279.

London was filled with troops from all those parts of England in which the king's authority was recognised in opposition to the earl's.

The whole course and tenor of these events prove to demonstration the frankness and loyalty of Godwin, and the duplicity and falsehood of the king. Intending at the London Conferences to appeal, not to force, but to reason and justice, Godwin approached the metropolis at the head of a small body of followers, with which he took up his quarters in his own palace at Southwark. Siward, Leofric, his son Alfgar, with all that was truly noble in the land, had soon reason to repent that the cause of the great earl was not tried at Gloucester, where the near equality of forces might have insured something like justice. Edward's court swarmed with delators and traitors, chiefly if not wholly foreigners, who clearly saw the impossibility of subjecting England to Norman influence, until the House of Godwin should be overthrown.

Capital accusations, through the vindictive hostility of the Norman primate were now revived against the earl[1] and his eldest son, though the former had been acquitted in full Witenagemót by the whole aristocracy of the realm, and the latter had received the king's pardon with solemn assurance of safety on his return from Flanders. No man, however, could rely on the king's word, since everybody's life in the kingdom lay at the mercy of those intriguing churchmen whom he had made the interpreters of his conscience.

One circumstance connected with these transactions is enveloped with more than ordinary obscurity. Hostages, it has been related, were given by the king to the earl at Gloucester. They appear to have been a number of youthful nobles or thanes, who were now, as a preliminary to all negociation, required by the leaders of the royal party to be restored. Confident in

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 401.

his own integrity, and the equity of his peers, Godwin at once complied with the king's demand, but no corresponding sentiment of honour on the opposite side led to the restoration of his hostages, among whom were, his own son Wulfnoth, and Hacon the son of Sweyn. On the contrary, for an offence previously condoned, the earl of Hereford was once more pronounced an outlaw, while he himself and his second son, Harold, were haughtily commanded to appear and take their trial.

Ten years before, during the reign of Hardicanute, the earl of Wessex had cleared himself by his own oath, and by the oaths of nearly the whole peerage of the realm, before the great Council of the Nation, of all participation in the crime now again, by the rancour of archbishop Robert, laid to his charge. Still he was ready to undergo a second trial, provided that for himself, his son Harold, and their compurgators, a safe conduct and proper hostages were given. That such a precaution was needed, it seems impossible to deny. The king's court and council swarmed with his enemies —and we may fairly infer that Stigand,[1] bishop of Winchester, who conducted the negociation, saw too much reason to apprehend that, should the earl cross the river on any other conditions, his ruin and death would have immediately followed. This became manifest to all, when, at the instigation of the primate, Godwin was required to restore prince Alfred and his accomplices to life or quit the kingdom in five days.

No amount of prudence will always suffice to protect men against the law of vicissitude. At Gloucester, with an immense army at his back, the great statesman might have extorted fair terms from the king; but in the course of a few weeks the more subtle policy of Edward's courtiers had turned the tide against him. Aid, legal and illegal, had been unscrupulously sought by Edward to enable him to accomplish the over-

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 402.

throw of his father-in-law; for, in addition to his own English and Danish subjects, he had secretly invited William the Bastard to hasten over to England with a Norman contingent. Upon such Machiavellian artifices Godwin had not reckoned. His followers, therefore, perceiving themselves to be greatly outnumbered by the king's forces, who filled London, and were probably drawn up in menacing array along the river's banks, soon began to desert,[1] upon which, seeing there was no further time for delay, Godwin and his sons resolved to provide for their safety by flight. Their design being suspected, Edward, during the following night, sent forth Aldred,[2] bishop of Worcester, at the head of a body of cavalry, to waylay and cut off the fugitives; but this prelate being a steady friend of the exiled family, executed his orders with honourable negligence. To distract the counsels of their enemies, the fugitives separated and took different routes; Harold and his brother Leofwine flying to Bristol, where, to be ready for the worst, Sweyn had prepared for them a ship in which they passed over into Ireland,[3] where they were hospitably received and protected by the Irish king.

Godwin, with his wife Githa, and his sons Sweyn, Tostig, and Gurth, fled with all speed to Bosenham, where a small fleet, which appears to have been always kept in readiness, lay at anchor. Hastily embarking their treasures, with as many of their followers as the ships would contain, they left the shores of Sussex amidst the tears and lamentations of the people, and with auspicious autumnal gales sailed for Flanders, to the renowned count Baldwin, the ancient friend of the Godwin family and of England.

But the triumph of the foreign courtiers was not yet complete; still in the palace lingered one member of

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 279.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1052.
[3] Florence of Worcester, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1051.

the Godwin family, whom it was necessary to humiliate or destroy. This was the queen, the beautiful and loving Editha, whose heart had for years been torn with sorrow by the dissensions and hatreds of those most dear to her. The crafty primate now represented to the king, that for the maintenance of public peace and order, it would be necessary he should separate from his wife, and remove her from the sight of the people, lest, beholding her beautiful countenance overshadowed with grief, they might be led to think too deeply of the wrongs which caused it. Destitute equally of affection and of justice, Edward fell easily into the designs of his Norman favourite. He had never loved his wife, and now, perhaps, accorded her a double portion of his hatred on account of the difficulty which the destruction of her family had caused him. She therefore received orders to leave the palace, and with one female attendant, according to some, with a splendid retinue, according to others, but in either case as a prisoner, proceeded to strict confinement in the monastery of Wilton,[1] where she had received a part of her education. Considering from what kind of home she had been driven, how friendless and forlorn had been her condition at court, and to what insults she must have been hourly exposed from the coarse and reckless enemies of her House, this cloistered captivity was rather to be coveted than otherwise.

We must be careful, however, not to regard Editha's banishment as a mere act of policy, since her simple removal would, in that case, have sufficed. Edward's motives lay deeper. He evidently desired to make her feel how hateful was the tie which bound him to her, and was not unwilling that the whole country should be made acquainted with his matrimonial discords, and the insults and humiliations it was in his power to heap upon

[1] Most writers, following the Saxon Chronicle, say Wherwell; but in the Life of Edward, written by a contemporary, and dedicated to Editha herself, the account I have adopted is given. Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 403.

his unoffending consort. He deprived her, therefore, publicly of all her lands and manors, her gold and her silver,[1] her superb robes and queenly ornaments, and sent her forth from his palace in the primitive habit of a nun to expiate her relationship to the great statesman whom sacerdotal parasites and adulators had taught him to regard as his enemy.

By these transactions, the way to a pacific invasion of England by the Normans appeared to be thrown open. The great island, renowned equally for its fertility and beauty, which had constituted one of the most cherished provinces of the Roman Empire, now lay prostrate before a horde of half-reclaimed Scandinavian pirates, who flocked across the Channel to glut their insatiable appetite for gold. At the head of these came Robert the Devil's Bastard, whom, during the late troubles, Edward had invited over to co-operate in the ruin of his benefactor and father-in-law. William, we are told, arrived with an imposing array[2] of knights and men-at-arms, who were all received and entertained magnificently[3] by the un-English king. To stimulate the desires of the Norman chief, Edward led him over the fairest portions of the realm, displaying to him its richly-wooded uplands, its vast and fertile plains, its shadowy forests, its superb palaces and castles, its spacious and gorgeous monasteries, in comparison with which those of the Continent dwindled into hovels, its broad ship-crowded rivers, which made William regard the Seine as a trout stream, and the Orne as a dirty kennel.

Though there could have been no question between the Confessor and his ducal visitor respecting the succession to the English throne—which, to do the former justice, he seems never, during his whole life, to have

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1048. William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[2] "Then soon came William, the earl, from beyond sea, with a great band of Frenchmen." Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1052. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1051, says he came over "with a vast retinue of Normans." Higden, Polychronicon, III. 279.

[3] Chronica de Mailros, I. 157.

dreamt of altering in favour of his guest—it is scarcely to be doubted that William's designs received fresh development from this visit. He beheld the kingdom gorged with wealth, without martial ability to defend it; for Leofric and Siward were old, and the great natural leaders of the chivalry of the land were in exile. Far and near, moreover, in church and state, his own subjects were stationed as so many advance-guards of his policy. Robert of Jumièges at Canterbury; William in the bishopric of London, Ulph in the see of Dorchester, Radulph in the monastery of Abingdon, while Odda had been raised to the earldom of Devonshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, and Cornwall.[1]

Even Algar, son of the earl of Mercia, though thoroughly English by parentage, was deemed favourable to the new scheme of government, and, therefore, enriched with the spoils of the banished family, and created earl of Essex and East Anglia.[2] When the duke, after being treated with profuse hospitality and laden with countless presents, departed for Normandy, the king, with malignant and ignoble revenge, delivered into his hands the hostages he had received from the great earl at Gloucester; that is to say, Wulfnoth, his own son, and Hakon the son of Sweyn, probably by the lady abbess, who were thus condemned to wear out their lives in hopeless captivity, though almost within sight of England's towering white cliffs.

By this close alliance with the Normans, Edward considered himself sufficiently strengthened to dispense with the services of the Danish fleet. The veteran sea-kings, therefore, who had come into England with Sweyn and Canute, with the jarl Thorkill, and the semi-Scandinavian son of Emma, were paid what was due to them, and dismissed. No longer, therefore, did the Saxon behold the hated Raven Standard floating over his waters, neither was he called upon any more to contribute

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1048. [2] Saxon Chronicle, *ubi supra*.

annually the Danegeld, which, after continuing thirty-eight years as a badge of inferiority and disgrace, had been abolished.

The triumph of Edward's favourites, though apparently complete, was not of long duration. From policy externally at work, storms came across the sea to break up the tranquillity of the confederates. A formidable fleet of Irish pirates appearing suddenly in the mouth of the Severn, and co-operating with Griffith, prince of Wales, ravaged all the country on the Wye. Bishop Aldred, who belonged literally to the church militant, in the lead of a small force went out to meet them; but a knowledge of his movements having been conveyed to Griffith by the treachery of some Welshmen in his camp, he was attacked unexpectedly at break of day, and routed with considerable loss. Soon after a mixed body of English and Normans encountered the same enemy near Leominster, and were defeated, after which the Kymric chief returned with abundant spoil to his mountain fastnesses.

These, however, were insignificant skirmishes, which only served to distract the attention of the court, while the master-enterprise was organising in Flanders; but before it could be thoroughly matured, Godwin received a fresh blow from the hand of fortune. His proud and gallant son Sweyn, thwarted in love, and tortured by remorse, assumed the hair-cloth, staff, and scrip, and set out barefoot on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. According to the rules of the Church, he was forbidden to enter a bath or a warm bed, condemned to subsist on bread and water, and excluded—save on rare occasions—from the communion of all Christians. To charity, he owed his daily bread. How he travelled, what he suffered, we can never know. It is only stated, that having after long and weary wanderings arrived at Jerusalem, and performed the penances enjoined, he turned his face once more towards England, by the way of Asia Minor.

Here, however, in the ancient kingdom of Lycia,[1] worn down by fatigue, cold, and hunger, and the incessant stings of conscience, or, as some say, pierced by the swords of the Saracens,[2] the heir of the most illustrious House in Christendom perished in a manner so uncertain and obscure, that in no Chronicler do we discover the least indication of his last resting-place. Had it been otherwise, some noble crusader, full of the renown of the Godwin dynasty, would probably have turned aside from bloody conflicts with the infidels to erect a humble monument to the memory of this guilty, but great and unfortunate man, whose impetuous passions were always in extremes, now urging him into conflict with the monarch of England, and now inducing him to adopt the palmer's weeds, and grovel in the dust before the tomb of Christ.

But neither domestic calamities, nor the hostility of Edward and his priests, could break the spirit of the earl of Wessex. The love of England was still warm in his heart; his pride, also, and ambition, were as predominant as ever; and if he had lost one son by death and another by royal treachery, he had still five left, who, whatever failings they might have, were inured to conflict, and as familiar with danger as with their beds. The marriage of Tostig, the fiercest of them all, with Baldwin's daughter,[3] had linked his House with the fortunes of Flanders; and the king of France, partly influenced by the great count, partly by jealousy of the Normans, exercised all the influence he possessed to effect a reconciliation between the banished earl and the king. But Edward was implacable.

Meanwhile Harold and Leofwine were negociating with the princes of Ireland for the raising of an army

[1] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2332. Matthew of Westminster; Saxon Chronicle, A. D. 1052, supposes Sweyn to have died at Constantinople.

[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[3] Simeonis Dunelmensis Historia, p. 35; Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1051; Henry de Knyghton, p. 2331, supposes Sweyn to have been married to Judith.

to avenge their father's wrongs. Throughout England the people endured with indignant impatience the treatment of the great earl, which they looked upon as the disgrace and ruin of the country, so exalted was the opinion entertained of his virtue, wisdom, and abilities. By persons of the highest distinction, messengers and ambassadors were sent to him as to a sovereign prince, expressing their readiness to take up arms, and, if necessary, to die in his cause; nor was this done clandestinely, or even with the affectation of secresy, but openly, in the face of day, and by almost the whole English nation.

Reluctant, however, to take any step which might kindle the flames of civil war, Godwin waited patiently, in the hope that time might soften the king's resentment, or the ordinary vicissitudes of life bring him under new and better influences. His patience and hopes were vain. While he lingered in Flanders, the Norman party was hourly striking deeper root in England, diffusing itself over the face of the country, and rapidly enveloping in the folds of its power one strong position after another until almost the whole land assumed a foreign aspect. The king himself, whose life was passed in monkish devotion, or in the chase, seems to have experienced peculiar delight in beholding England assimilating itself to the Normandy of his youth, in watching the rise of turreted castles like those of Domfront or Falaise, at the foot of which he had sat in boyhood, listening to the nightingale, or to the pealing organ swelling up at grey dawn from churches in the vale below. Unhappily, he likewise loved to listen to the anti-national suggestions of foreign prelates, and the envenomed calumnies of the cloister, which struck at the noblest men of English race, and estranged him from those whom, above all others, he should have honoured and cherished.

Negociation proving fruitless, the earl had at length recourse to arms, and, while Harold and Leofwine

gathered forces in Ireland, organised a formidable army, chiefly from those who from admiration of his genius, his patriotism, his virtue, and, above all, perhaps his hostility to the foreign adventurers, flocked to his standard from England. His troops and fleet being ready, he dropped down the Flemish river into the deep sea, and, a favourable gale springing up, steered, with high hope and courage, towards England, where his coming was ardently longed for by nearly the whole nation. At the same time his sons set sail from Ireland with a formidable armament, and landing in the earldom of the Norman Odda, swept like a storm of fire along the shore,[1] spreading discouragement and terror among the adherents of the king and his foreigners. At length, the father and the sons met, and a joyful meeting it was, for around them they beheld the pledges that their fortunes were once more in the ascendant—stout and stalwart Englishmen, with their swords, battle-axes, and atagars, ready to do battle for the earl and England.

The united fleet rendezvoused off the Isle of Wight,[2] where the leaders of the family deliberated, and laid down the plan of their momentous enterprise. Having determined in what manner they were to act, the four sons, Harold and Tostig, Leofwine and Gurth, ranged themselves under their father's command. The sail was hoisted, and the whole fleet, developing itself in line, moved leisurely up the Channel, putting into one port after another, and receiving everywhere fresh accessions of ships and men. From all the southern counties, the integral parts of Godwin's own earldom, and from Harold's territories of East Anglia, reinforcements arrived continually.[3] The people flocked to the beach to behold the father of his country, returning to deliver them from strangers, and loud and incessant cheers greeted the progress of the fleet. This was, doubtless,

[1] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 759.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1052.

[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1052.

the proudest day of Godwin's life. He saw that the people identified him in their hearts with their own welfare, and if his resolves had needed fresh strength, this would have supplied it.

Having sailed along the shores of Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Sussex and Kent, the fleet rounded the North Foreland, and entered the Thames.[1] Intelligence of the earl's approach having been brought to the king, he mustered his Normans around him, with such followers as they could command, and marched at their head to London. No enthusiasm, however, greeted him as he passed. The affections of the people were with the earl.[2] In the midst, therefore, of a sullen multitude, Edward entered the capital, and ranged such ships as he possessed along the northern bank of the Thames, from London-bridge towards Westminster, while his army, disheartened by seeing foreigners at its head, was drawn up behind. Presently the streamers of Godwin's fleet were beheld flapping in the breeze, and the vast array came sweeping on till it reached the bridge, where, no guard being posted to arrest its advance, it passed under the southern arch, and deployed along the quays of Southwark, in the face of the royal armament. Shouts from the city rent the air, when the earl's standard was beheld greeting his native land, and the authorities of the city throwing open to him their gates, proceeded publicly, attended by thousands of the common people, to welcome him back to the capital,[3] which was more his than Edward's.

The earl's fleet having lain quiet for some time, at length put itself in fighting order, assumed the form of a crescent, and began to advance across the stream, with the design of enclosing Edward's ships between its horns. The most bewildering terror now took possession of the royal leaders—a parley was sounded, and Edward expressed his desire to negociate. Men of prudence and

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1052.

[2] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1052.

[3] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 406.

policy, like Stigand, bishop of Winchester, interposed their good offices,[1] and sought to effect a reconciliation between the king and the earl, who demanded for himself and his sons nothing but the restoration of their estates and honours. For awhile the influence of the Norman favourites co-operating with Edward's hatred of his father-in-law delayed the re-establishment of peace; what hopes they entertained, it is difficult to conjecture. If they flattered themselves with the expectation of popular support, they were speedily undeceived, since nothing could be more manifest than the resolution of the whole people to live or die with Godwin, who, from the moment of his appearance in London, experienced the utmost difficulty in checking their inclination to fall upon the king.

The result of these negociations was the giving and receiving of hostages, the first preliminary to a reconciliation. Consternation and dismay now seized upon the Norman favourites. Robert, the archbishop, with the other foreign prelates, and their retinues, instantly mounted their horses, and rode towards the eastern gate, where, experiencing some obstruction, they drew their weapons and maimed or murdered a considerable number of young men.[2] Having thus got clear of London, they dashed towards the coast, and reaching Eadulf's-ness there threw themselves into a crazy boat, in which they reached Normandy. So extreme was the primate's fear, that he cast aside and left behind him his pall, together with all the other insignia of his dignity, and effected his escape, apparently in disguise. He had risen to the archbishopric by intrigue, calumny, and corruption, and, with a heart full of vindictive feelings, hurried to Rome, to plot against the peace and happiness of the country which had so long fostered him.

The Witenagemót was now assembled without the city, probably in Westminster, and before this august

[1] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1052. [2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1052.

council Godwin and his sons completely cleared themselves of everything which had been laid to their charge. Edward's authority became mute in presence of the legislature; he, therefore, smothered his resentment, and accorded to the great earl and to his sons the semblance at least of friendship. Another act of reparation now also became necessary; he recalled his beautiful queen,[1] and restored to her, under compulsion, her estates, her manors, her treasures, her place in the palace, but not in his heart. A general clearance was at the same time made of the foreign courtiers, who, with the truculent primate at their head, were declared outlaws from the kingdom. Stigand,[2] the distinguished bishop of Winchester, was at the same time raised to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury, a measure just and laudable in itself, but fraught with endless complications and calamities.

It must not be supposed that the outlawry of foreigners extended to persons of inferior rank, who, dispersed over the country, and protected by their obscurity, retained possession of the lands and gifts they had received from the impolitic king. His personal favourites, also,[3] especially his maternal relatives, were exempted from the operation of the act, and remained, either to hatch new plots and intrigues at court, or to lay their insatiable hands on the honours and possessions of the English in various parts of the country. But the worst consequence of their presence in England was its effect upon the spirit of the English Church. Hitherto our ecclesiastical institutions, though allied to those of the Continent, and liable to receive from time to time anomalous influences from Rome, scarcely formed a part of its spiritual system, though it would be difficult to point out any cause, save the peculiarity of the national character, which withheld them from merging completely in those of the papacy. In Normandy, as well as in

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1052.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, *ubi supra.*

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1052.

France, ultramontane ideas had long predominated. Italians had found their way into its churches and monasteries, and by the superiority of their learning, their supple, complying dispositions, their hereditary craftiness, and blind devotion to the sovereign pontiff, on which alone they often bestowed the name of piety, rendered them dangerous to the native clergy, and ready instruments for the furtherance of any flagitious enterprise which promised to enlarge the dominion of the popedom.

Through the feeble intellect and perverted opinions of Edward, the religious independence of his country was insidiously undermined, and ultimately overthrown. Upon the flight and outlawry of the Norman primate, that distinguished statesman and prelate, Stigand, was, as we have seen, elevated to the vacant see; but Robert, proceeding directly to Rome, and employing the usual arguments to incline the Pontiff to his side, contrived to have the pall refused to the Saxon archbishop. The pretence on which Rome based its refusal, was that it could not recognise a second primate of England while the first was yet living. Crimes, even those of treason and murder, constituted in its view no justification of an archbishop's outlawry. The reasons which induced the Roman court to adopt this course of proceeding appeared thirteen years later, but were annulled or set aside for the time by Benedict X.,[1] who acknowledged the virtues and claims of Stigand, and bestowed on him the pall. Robert, who had probably gone to Rome as Duke William's agent, having performed his mission, returned to Normandy, where he died soon afterwards at Jumièges.[2] To this meddling and unscrupulous priest has been generally attributed the first idea of the Norman Conquest. For this assumption there appears to be no ground, the design seems rather to have originated with Robert the

[1] Anglia Sacra, II. 634.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 280.

Devil, whose capricious ambition led him to take the first step towards an invasion by fitting out a fleet, which actually sailed for England, but was driven back by a storm. William inherited the scheme with the duchy, and seems always to have set more value on the former than on the latter. In laying the foundations of success, he depended on many things; chiefly, however, on the Church, and on the practical celibacy and grovelling superstition of Edward, which, by leaving the throne without an heir, must greatly facilitate his projects.

The event, however, which contributed most to the ruin of the English cause was the illness and death of Godwin. Shortly after his return from Flanders, it was noticed that he fell ill,[1] and retired from court, probably to his castle of Bosenham. For the illustrious position he held in the realm, and the steadiness with which he had withstood the emissaries of Rome, he was necessarily hated by the monks, one of whom suggests that the malady which now assailed him was scarcely sufficient penance for the lands he held in spite of certain monastic claims.[2] Bishops and archbishops, cardinals and popes, have expiated their hostility to the monastic orders with their lives. In the fierceness and deadliness of their rancour, cowled assassins have mingled poison with the sacramental wine, and gloated over their victims, as they breathed forth their souls in contortions and agony, at the very altar of God. With undoubted knowledge of these facts, is it too great a want of charity to suspect that what Fra Paolo sarcastically denominates "Italian physic" was administered to the great earl of Wessex? Whether we accept or reject this surmise,

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1052.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1052. The writer, evidently a monk full of malignity against the champion of his country, relates his illness and death as follows. "It was on the Monday after St. Mary's mass that Godwin with his ships came to Southwark, and the morning after, on the Tuesday, they were reconciled, as it here before stands. Godwin then grew sick soon after he landed, and he afterwards departed; but he did all too little penance for the property of God which he held belonging to many holy places."

Godwin's health began to decline from the moment he partook of those banquets which followed upon his reconciliation with the king; and on the following Easter Monday, A.D. 1053, while sitting at table with the Confessor and his own sons, Harold, Tostig, and Gurth, at Winchester, he sank speechless on the floor. Having been borne by the youthful earls into the king's chamber,[1] he there lingered in much suffering till the following Thursday, when he breathed his last, April 18th.

The unprincipled Chroniclers who, at a later period, wrote under Norman influence, invented a vindictive legend to account for the great man's sudden death. Seeing the king's cupbearer slip with one foot, and recover himself with the other, he exclaimed, laughingly, "See how brother helps brother!" "Yes," replied Edward, "and so would Alfred, had you not slain him, have helped me." Confounding different epochs and systems of manners, they pretend that the earl, in self-vindication, appealed to the form of ordeal called Corsnæd,[2] and taking up a piece of bread,[3] exclaimed, "May this morsel choke me[4] if I had any hand in your brother's

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum (p. 187), merely observes that the great earl, while sitting at the king's table, was seized by a sudden illness, and fell back speechless in his chair.

[2] Ancient Laws and Institutions of England, Glossary, article Corsnæd. See also Dooms of king Canute, Eccles. 5, and compare Wihtræd, 17, 18. Eth., 19-22. H. L. XIV. 8. E. and G., 3. Edm. E. I., &c. A similar kind of ordeal formerly prevailed, and still perhaps prevails, among the Cingalese: when men were suspected of being brigands, a decoction was made with the root of the rhamnus and given them to drink. If it made them sick they were supposed to be guilty, if not they stood acquitted. Pennant, View of Hindústan, I. 220.

[3] Lives of Edward the Confessor, p. 271, 372. The author of the Vita Ædwardi Regis, speaks in very different language of the death of the great Earl: "Reconciliatis ergo duce et ejus filiis cum rege, et omni patria in pacis tranquillitate conquiescente, secundo post hæc anno obiit idem dux felicis memoriæ, exequiis que suis in luctum decidit populus, hunc patrem, hunc nutricium suum regnique, memorabant suspiriis et assiduis fletibus," p. 408.

[4] Ailredus Abbas Rievallis (De Vita et Miraculis Edwardi Confessoris, p. 395) concentrates all the monastic venom against Godwin, and makes Edward exclaim, when he beholds his father-in-law stiffening in death, "Bear out this dog!" upon which his sons present themselves and carry away their

murder;" then attempting to swallow the mouthful, he was choked accordingly. This, however, was the pagan form of the Corsnæd, or ordeal by bread and cheese, for which the administering of the sacrament to the accused had long been substituted.

The character of earl Godwin, in most of our histories, lies buried beneath a load of calumny.[1] From the ordinary faults and imperfections of mankind he was, doubtless, not exempt; he coveted large possessions, chiefly as a means of power, and, by the exercise of abilities of the highest order, aimed at controlling both sovereign and people. In the Witenagemót, the weight of his authority more than balanced the united influence of the earls of Mercia and Northumbria; and by degrees, as his sons grew up around him, and obtained earldoms in various parts of the realm, the policy he originated in his castle of Bosenham swayed, almost like an imperial decree, the movements of the whole nation.

In the Great Council of the kingdom his eloquence habitually bore down everything before it. Calm, moderate, and dignified, reining in with wisdom the impetuosity of his nature, he presented to those around him the *beau idéal* of an Englishman, with all his predilections and prejudices, the warmest attachment to his

father. Diceto (p. 476) advances one step farther, and closes his charitable narrative with maintaining the eternal damnation of the earl. Bromton (p. 944) writes in much the same spirit, and says that Harold dragged forth his father's body from beneath the table by the feet. Henry de Knyghton (p 2333) is little better than the echo of Bromton, whose narrative he merely abridges.

[1] I observe with pleasure that Dr. Hook, in his able Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury (I. 508, 509), speaks of earl Godwin in language every way befitting an English gentleman and a scholar. "This wonderful man," he says, "like Stigand, was persecuted by contemporary libellers, whose character very few among modern historians have taken the trouble to vindicate or investigate." And again: "Godwin was the connecting link between the Saxon and the Dane, and as the leader of the united English people, became one of the greatest men this country has ever produced, although, as is the English custom, one of the most maligned." It is honourable to Dr. Lingard that he ventured to take a more favourable view of earl Godwin's character than any of his predecessors.

native land, and a somewhat overweening contempt of foreigners. He was, without question, the greatest statesman of his age; and, indeed, statesmanship in England may almost be said to have commenced with him. Whether we look at home or abroad, we discover no man in Christendom worthy to be ranked with him, in genius or wisdom, in peace or war. His figure towers far above all his contemporaries; he constitutes the acmé of the purely Saxon mind. No taint of foreign blood was in him. He rose and grew up in Sussex, and, according to tradition, was braced and strengthened in youth by breasting the chill waves of poverty.

His father had been a rebel, a Viking on the deep; but, defeated in his designs, seems to have bequeathed to his only son the task of building up the fortunes of their House. It has been seen how he fulfilled his father's wishes. Godwin's lot was cast upon evil days. The marriage of Ethelred with Emma originated a fatal connexion between this country and Normandy, the first fruits of which forcing themselves but too obviously on his notice, he prevented, while he lived, from growing to maturity. The efforts, public and secret, which he found it necessary to make in the performance of this patriotic task, laid him open to the charge of craft and subtlety. Let it be granted, that he deserved the imputation; but it must be added that, if foreign invasion and conquest be an evil, from that evil England was preserved as long as his crafty and subtle head remained above ground; and had he lived thirteen years longer, the accumulated and concentrated scoundrelism of Europe would have been dashed away in foam and blood from the English shore.

Properly understood, Godwin's whole life was one protracted agony for the salvation of his country. He had to contend with every species of deleterious influence — ferocious, drunken, dissolute, and imbecile kings, the reckless intrigues of monasticism at the insti-

gation of Rome, and the unprincipled and infamous ambition of the Norman Bastard, who crept into England during this great man's exile, and fled in all haste at his return. What he had to contend with, what plots he frustrated, what malice he counteracted, what superstition and stupidity he rendered harmless, will never be known in detail. We perceive the indefinite and indistinct forms of these things floating through the mists of history, but cannot grasp and fix them for the instruction of posterity.

What the monks of Norman times relate of him, is only the evidence of their utter incapacity to comprehend his greatness, or to perceive how the glory, which they basely attempt to sully, enveloped and lighted up the whole land in which they were unworthy to be born. He is usually placed before the mind in juxtaposition with the feeble son of the "Unready," in what is supposed to be disadvantageous contrast. But, if we except Alfred, no king of the House of Cerdic ever laboured more to promote the welfare of England than the son of Wulfnoth. No act attributed to him, whether by friend or foe, is traceable to any other motive. When he commenced his career, the Danes had become an integral portion of the English people, and the war that raged was a war, not of races, but of dynasties. He attached himself to the nobler leader, and aided him in achieving victories which reflected lustre on England. After that chief's death he watched faithfully over the destinies of his family, till it became extinguished in drunkenness. He then transferred his allegiance to the false and incompetent Edward, who in the days of his distress cowered at his feet, but afterwards, in the plenitude of the power he had given him, sought to obliterate by his ruin and death the memory of his own self-inflicted abasement.

When the remains of the great earl were deposited in the old minster of the ancient capital of Wessex, the

people, who know how to distinguish their benefactors from their oppressors, thronged round the grave, and gave vent to their sorrow in sobs, lamentations, and tears. Throughout the whole land, all men of Saxon race sorrowed for earl Godwin's loss as for the loss of a father; and even the monks, conciliated by gifts of manors and gold, prayed for his soul. Githa, the partner of his fortunes, the mother of his children, who, after long years passed in love and honour, was exposed, towards the close of life, to a tempest of calamities rarely paralleled in history or fable, sought to blunt by lavish donations the edge of sacerdotal rancour, and with her contemporaries succeeded.[1]

Seven sons had Godwin;[2] three of them, the bravest of the brave: two, blameless and recluse; while other two, Sweyn and Tostig, equally distinguished for their genius and their crimes, precipitated the ruin of their native land, and convulsed all Christendom. Of his daughter, the stainless gem of his house, I have spoken elsewhere. Over all his offspring, Nemesis brooded, though not visibly before his death. They resembled the great tragic families of heroic times in beauty, intelligence, and misfortune. By the Norman triumph of Hastings' plain they were scattered far over the world, some to leave their bones in Asia or on the Baltic shores, while others imparted their Anglo-Danish energy to the imperial family of Russia, and originated a long line of Czars.[3] Nevertheless, we have still among

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 408. Anglia Sacra, I. 293.

[2] Malmesbury, following a different tradition, says he had two wives; first, a sister of Canute, who brought him one son, drowned on horseback in the Thames. This princess, he tells us, amassed great wealth by exporting beautiful English girls to be sold as slaves in Denmark, for which, apparently, she was struck dead by lightning— obviously a Norman libel. His whole account of the earl's family is full of errors; for example, Harold is made older than Sweyn, and Godwin's seventh son, instead of being drowned, as he fables, in the Thames, took the cowl at Salisbury, where he died at a very advanced age. II. 13.

[3] Snorro Sturleson, II. 178. Karamsin, Histoire de la Russie, II. 22.

us an illustrious representative of the House of Godwin, since Victoria, the sovereign of the British empire, is descended from the widow of Tostig, earl of Northumbria.[2]

[2] Gibbon, in his Antiquities of the House of Brunswick, Works, III. 191, 192, relates briefly the history of Guelph VI. who, in 1071, was invested by the Diet and the emperor Henry IV. with the duchy of Bavaria, which in that age extended to the confines of Hungary, and his nuptials were celebrated with Judith, the daughter of Baldwin, count of Flanders, and the widow of a titular king of England. This titular king, he goes on to explain, was Tostus (Tostig), son of earl Godwin, and younger brother of Harold, against whom, with a Norwegian army, he had unsuccessfully disputed the crown. Whatever title Tostig may have assumed abroad, English history nowhere bestows on him the name of king, and Judith, consequently, had no right to be entitled queen of England.

CHAPTER XVII.

ASCENDANCY OF HAROLD AND TOSTIG.

By the death of Godwin, a new distribution of the principal honours of the realm was rendered necessary. Harold succeeded to the earldom of Wessex; and Algar, son of Leofric, obtained Harold's former earldom of East Anglia.[1] Edward now, at length, bethought him of his near relations, the son and grandchildren of his brother Ironside, who had long endured all the evils of exile in Hungary. He therefore despatched Aldred, bishop of Worcester,[2] a renowned statesman and warrior, into Germany, as his ambassador to negociate with the emperor Henry III. for their return, designing to select from among them an heir to succeed him on the throne of England.[3] Up to this time, therefore, he had indisputably cherished no wish to be succeeded by the duke of Normandy, or even by Harold. The episcopal statesman crossed the Channel, and at Cologne was received with distinguished honour by Henry the Third and Archbishop Hermann.[4] But the whole face of Germany was at that time overcast with trouble and confusion, owing to the war which raged with Hungary, the death of the successor of Attila, and of the emperor himself. Yet, after three years' delay and much nego-

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 280.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1054.

[3] Higden affirms (Polychronicon, III. 280), that he intended to make his cousin and namesake his heir: "decreverat Rex eum constituisse harædem suum in Anglia."

[4] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1054.

ciation, Aldred succeeded in his mission, and returned to England, bringing with him Edward,[1] the son of Ironside, Edgar the Etheling, and the princesses Margaret and Christina.[2]

But the son of Ironside was not destined long to enjoy the hospitality of the land of his forefathers; he died suddenly in London, before he had obtained an audience of the king.[3] Some historians,[4] with superfluous Machiavelism, have imagined he may have been kept from court by the partisans of Harold, and express surprise that since the son of Godwin profited most by his death, he should not have been charged by the Norman writers with having caused it. Such a suspicion, however, was too absurd to be put forward even by those Chroniclers, because the survival of Edgar the Etheling rendered it preposterous.

A transaction now presses for notice which the genius of Shakespeare has enveloped with imperishable glory. Macbeth, king of Scotland, having raised himself to the throne by the murder of his predecessor Duncan, now provoked his fate, either by refusing allegiance to the English crown, or by perpetrating aggressions beyond the borders. By Edward the Confessor, Siward, carl of Northumbria,[5] was commanded to invade Scotland, depose the assassin, and raise Duncan's son, Malcolm, prince of Cumbria, to the throne. In this enterprise Siward engaged with a double zest. He loved war for its own sake, and to this passion a strong feeling of interest was added, since Malcolm, the Cumbrian chief, was his son-in-law. Eagerly, therefore, did the old Danish jarl, at the head of his Northumbrians, and a royal contingent from the south, march across the Scottish border, while a fleet moved north-

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 189. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 280.

[2] This princess became a nun, and died at Romsey. William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1057.

[4] Lappenberg, II. 259.

[5] Chronica De Mailros, I. 158.

wards along the shore to co-operate with the land forces, which we are told consisted chiefly of cavalry.[1] The encounter took place in Aberdeenshire. With Macbeth rode to the field those Norman knights and men-at-arms who, on the return of Godwin from Flanders, had fled into Scotland, and were, in all likelihood, the chief instigators of the war. Siward, with his son Osborn, led the English and the Danes—the battle was fierce and protracted—thousands of the Scots and all the Normans fell,[2] and the tyrant Macbeth fled ignominiously from the field, and was heard of no more. The victory, however, cost Siward the life of his gallant son, who appears to have fallen early in the battle. When a soldier brought the news to the brave old man, he inquired where he received his wound. On being told in front, he replied, "Then he has died a death worthy of himself and of me." During the following year, however, Siward followed his gallant son to the tomb. There may be something mythical in the manner in which the Chroniclers describe his death; but it is at least characteristic of the times, and of that old viking energy which was already fast disappearing before the influence of civilisation. When he perceived his end approaching, he exclaimed, "Shame on me that I did not fall in one of the many battles I have fought, but am left to die at last the death of a sick cow. Nevertheless, put on my armour of proof, gird the sword by my side, place the helmet on my head, let me have my shield in my left hand, and my gold inlaid battle-axe in my right, that the bravest of soldiers may die in a soldier's guise."[3] Siward was buried at York, in the church of St. Olaf, which he had himself erected.[4]

In a Witenagemót held in London, the rival Houses of Godwin and Leofric once more put to trial their strength and influence in the kingdom. Harold beheld

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 187.
[2] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1054.
[3] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 760.
[4] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1055.

with profound disapprobation his own earldom of East Anglia bestowed on Leofric's son Algar, who in all the recent troubles appears to have leaned towards the Norman party. When formally accused in the council of treason towards the king and the nation, he admitted his guilt,[1] apparently choosing to owe his safety in the realm to his own valour and the forces at his command, rather than to his innocence. But, in his overweening pride, he had miscalculated his power. No sooner had the fatal admission escaped his lips than his antagonists pressed their advantage, and appealing vigorously to the king and the Witan, caused him to be outlawed and banished. Harold's own policy, when in exile, now became the model in conformity with which Alfgar shaped his conduct; he fled to Ireland, where, finding a Norwegian Viking roaming the seas in search of adventures, he took him into his service.[2] From the Irish chiefs also he procured aid, and then, with a powerful fleet, manned with Celts, Mercians, and Northmen, repassed the Channel into Wales, whose king, Griffith,[3] he knew was always ready to hazard crown and life in any attempt against England.

Algar's negociations with the Welsh prince were soon concluded. Placing himself and his followers under the command of Griffith, who naturally took the lead in the expedition, he descended with the united army from the mountains, traversed the marches, and advanced upon Hereford. Report, however, travelling more rapidly than battalions, the approach of Griffith soon became known to the English and Normans in garrison along the frontier, under the command of Radulph, the nephew of Edward. This nobleman, dominated by

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1055, where we find these words, "They outlawed Elgar, the earl, because it was cast upon him that he was a traitor to the king and to all the people of the land, and he made a confession of it before all the men who were there gathered, though the word escaped him unintentionally."

[2] Historia Ingulphi, I. 66.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1055.

continental ideas, and regardless of the character of the English, had introduced innovations into the army, and by transforming the native infantry into cavalry, destroyed their confidence in themselves. With a motley force, half Norman, half Saxon, ill-disciplined, and divided by mutual dislike, Radulph advanced timidly to encounter the mountaineers. His reluctance to face them may be inferred from the fact, that the enemy were suffered to approach within two miles of Hereford before a blow was struck in the city's defence. There, however, the armies met; but before a spear was thrown, the Normans, with their cowardly leader,[1] turned and fled, and the English followed their example. There was consequently no battle, but in the bloody pursuit between four and five hundred of the fugitives were cut off without the slightest loss to the Celtic army.

Hereford now lay defenceless before the invaders, Welsh, Norwegians, and Irish, who, with Griffith and Algar at their head, poured into it promiscuously, and betook themselves to violence and plunder. Knowing where, in Catholic cities, most treasure was usually to be found, they proceeded to the monastery, at the door of which seven of the canons,[2] trusting to their sacerdotal character, had stationed themselves to prohibit their entrance. They were immediately slain, and the soldiers, exploring the whole edifice, pillaged the shrines, the chapels, the altars, seizing upon crucifixes, chalices, reliquaries, and whatever else was valuable, after which they set the building on fire.[3] Throughout the city also they spread carnage and conflagration, and then, collecting their booty, and carrying away captive all of both sexes that remained alive, they retreated like a storm towards the Cambrian mountains, leaving nothing but desolation in their track.[4]

[1] Florence of Worcester, *ubi supra*.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 188.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1055.

[4] Chronicle of the Princes of Wales, A.D. 1054. Annales Cambriæ, A.D. 1055.

When intelligence of this inroad reached the court, Edward ordered an army from all parts of the kingdom to be assembled at Gloucester, and conferring upon Harold the chief command, directed him to enter Wales and inflict severe chastisement on the invaders. But circumstances, which have escaped the notice of historians, had effected a change in the policy of the son of Godwin. Instead of pushing his rival to extremities, he contented himself with fortifying Hereford by surrounding it with a deep moat,[1] and afterwards penetrating with his army as far as Snowdon.[2] No battle appears to have taken place. Algar, probably growing weary of an exile's life, and cherishing but little sympathy with his allies—Scandinavian pirates, Irish kernes, and Welsh free-booters—despatched messengers to Harold to negociate peace and reconciliation. The future king of England was neither vindictive nor implacable; he received his rival into friendship, and as his decision was equivalent to that of Edward, in whose name he might be said to govern the realm, Algar was restored to his titles and honours.[3] The Viking fleet sailed to Chester[4] to await the payment of the sum which had been promised them for their services; and this having been discharged by Algar's father, Leofric, earl of Mercia, the pirates quitted the shores of England, and returned to their homes. Upon the death of Leofric, which happened in the following year, Algar succeeded to the earldom of Mercia, after which the Chroniclers, who are much given to repetition, relate another outlawry and inlawry with the self-same machinery of Norwegians, Irish, and Welsh. But this is obviously a mere echo of the former transaction, and no otherwise interesting than as it may illustrate the tendency of the monkish writers to lose themselves in reiteration.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1055.
[2] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1055.
[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1055.
[4] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1055; Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 188.

Algar's father, Leofric, is celebrated by the chroniclers for his wisdom as a statesman, and the extraordinary piety by which he and his countess Godiva were distinguished among their contemporaries. Of his sagacity we may form some conception from the fact that in the views he took of public affairs, he was generally opposed to earl Godwin, while he fell in with the prejudices, partialities, and caprices of the king. Pious he may have been, according to the theory of his age, and in the estimation of the monks, for he laid out large sums of money in the erection, repair, endowment, and enriching of minsters and monasteries. Twenty-two years and immense sums of money did he devote to the building of the abbey of Coventry,[1] in which, at the expense of his earldom and his people, and for the mere gratification of the fancy and greed of the monks, he piled up masses of gold and silver, relics, and precious stones. Here, in a shrine of silver, was deposited the arm of Augustine, bishop of Hippo,[2] purchased, as I have already related, at Pavia, by archbishop Ethelnoth, for a fabulous amount of gold and silver.

Those gifts, however, would have been trifles, had he not entailed upon the monastery estates and manors, woods, meadows, and arable lands, with farm-houses, and serfs to provide for the constant supply of the refectory. The same desire to conciliate heaven by costly gifts, led Leofric and his consort to expend large portions of their treasure in performing the same good offices for the churches of Worcester, Evesham, Wenlock and Leominster, together with those of John the Baptist, St. Wereburga at Leicester, and of St. Mary of Stowe.[3]

Events at this time appeared strongly tending towards the creation of a new dynasty. The reality of power had already passed from the House of Cerdic to that of

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1057. Compare Dr. Hook, in his Life of Archbishop Ethelnoth, I. 482.

[2] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 948.

[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1057.

Godwin; for upon the death of Siward, earl of Northumbria, the vacant government was bestowed on the queen's second brother, Tostig,[1] while the third brother, Gurth, succeeded Algar in the earldom of East Anglia.[2] Thus the Godwins became all powerful in the realm, swaying the north, the south, and the east, and eclipsing completely the noble family of Mercia. The two foremost figures on the scene were Harold and Tostig, men such as few ages or countries have brought forth at the same time. All Godwin's progeny were instinct with genius and beauty, though they differed very widely from each other in moral qualities.

A contemporary historian, familiar with the earls of Wessex and Northumbria, has painted their characters in glowing colours, and drawn them forth in an elaborate parallel. They were he says, both handsome and finely formed men, though Harold was the taller. In strength, fierceness, and daring they were equal; but the elder, having disciplined himself by infinite labour, watching, and abstinence, had acquired a milder manner and more humane wisdom. The character of Tostig, remarkable for its violence, even in those violent times, was still more distinguished for persevering vindictiveness. His will, however, being all powerful, he usually kept his tempestuous passions under control, and only let them loose in the channel in which, without obstruction, he desired them to flow. When he had an object in view, he proceeded towards it with an invincible firmness of soul, tinged at times with malignity. That he might appear to be guided by his friends, he consulted them separately; and inspired each with the conviction that his

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 409.

[2] The author of the Latin Life of the Confessor, having drawn with great vigour and discrimination the characters of Harold and Tostig, describes in the following manner the first step of their brother Gurth in the road to honours; Edward, he says, appointed Harold to defend the south, Tostig the north. "Junior orum quoque Gyrth, quem supra diximus, immunem non passus est idem rex a suis honoribus, sed comitatum ei dedit in ipso vertice Orientalis Angliæ et hunc ipsum amplificandum promisit, ubi maturior annos adolescentiæ exuerit," p. 410.

was the determining counsel. When once resolved, nothing could turn him from his purpose; and so sagacious were his views, that he appeared to be guided by instinct, while his policy seemed to spring from the very actions it produced, and consequently led generally to a prosperous result.

When he gave, it was with lavish munificence, and his generous inclinations were often directed by the advice of his countess, a religious and beneficent woman. In a character so resolute and inflexible, there was no room for falsehood or deceit. With a faith firm as adamant he adhered to his friends, while he pursued his enemies with unwavering and relentless animosity. In one word, he displayed in the eleventh century the firmness and the cruelty, the virtues and the vices, with which Lucius Scylla had, twelve hundred years before, excited the admiration and terror of Rome. In his domestic relations he was blameless, presenting a rare example of concentrated love and fidelity to the age in which he lived. For this virtue he is placed by the historian in tacit contrast with Harold, with whom the passion for women seems at least to have equalled the passion for sway. Fierce and cruel, Tostig refused to have his temper softened by the influence of the opposite sex; while Harold, in the midst of the greatest designs, lay ever open to the fascinations of women, on whom he lavished with profusion his affections and his opulence.[1]

[1] Sir Henry Ellis has, I think, satisfactorily proved that Harold had two wives: one, the mother of his children; second, the queen-dowager of Griffith, sister of the earls Edwin and Morcar, Ediva Pulchra, by whom he seems to have had no offspring. The immense amount of land she held is urged by Sir Henry as an argument for her not having been his mistress; her estates exceeded 27,000 acres, and were distributed over several counties. His mistress, Swan Neck, resided at Canterbury, and was still alive when the Domesday survey was taken. Introduction to Domesday, II. 79-81. Henry de Knyghton (p. 2339), a diligent collector of Norman libels, affirms that Harold never had a wife: "nec aliquam uxorem ducere voluit sed vi oppressit, filias Baronum et procerum atque militum de regno; quod ipsi ægre ferebant."

Both brothers pursued with constancy whatever they undertook; Tostig with the greater earnestness, Harold with the greater wisdom. The former aimed exclusively at the consummation of his enterprises, the latter at their fortunate consummation. Both could at times practise dissimulation, and that so completely, that even they who knew them most intimately could never divine in what direction their actions were tending. In their own family, among their countrymen, and even in strangers and foreigners, they excited admiration and attachment by their eloquence and the splendour of their manners. Harold, abounding more in generous sentiments, was more beloved; Tostig, dark, intrepid, indomitable, inspired those around him with the partiality of fear. Men often gazed at and followed him, though trembling, and more than doubtful of the result. Nor is the impression left upon the mind of posterity less characteristic of the men; Harold's dauntless name, his ambition, his loves, his misfortunes, inspire a tender regret like that of close consanguinity: while the bare mention of Tostig conjures up an inscrutable bloody spectre which rose at Bosenham castle, hung for awhile like a meteor over his contemporaries, and then sank into the ground at Stamford Bridge.

The glory of Edward the Confessor's reign is entirely traceable to these and other noblemen who then flourished in England, and with few and brief interruptions preserved the peace of the country. At leisure, therefore, from the toils of war, and protected in their pursuits by comparatively just laws, the industrious classes applied themselves diligently to the creation of wealth. Naturally addicted to agriculture, the English now enjoyed their favourite mode of life, and England began to assume that rich and cheerful aspect[1] which

[1] See in the Introduction to Domesday, *passim*, proofs of the great prosperity of England during Edward's reign, and of the signal depreciation in the value of all kinds of property occasioned by the Norman Conquest.

Nature designed it should always wear. Corn-fields, orchards, gardens, everywhere gave signs of plenty; homesteads thickly dotted the landscape, water-mills[1] clacked on every stream, salt-works[2] were numerous in several counties, flocks of sheep whitened the hills, the meadows and lowlands abounded with herds, while immense droves of swine, under the care of well-fed slaves, roamed in search of oak and beech mast through the forests.

Of the trees which taken together composed those forests, we are far from possessing sufficient information. Oaks we know have always abounded in England, where, like the elm, they sometimes tower to the height of a hundred and thirty feet,[3] and throw out on all sides immense boughs, beneath which whole bodies of cavalry might find shelter.[4] With woods of this king of trees[5] the face of the country was picturesquely dotted, as well as with clumps of beeches. Vast rows of elms, especially in moist meadows, and along the well-watered slopes of hills, groves of ordinary and mountain ash, which attained to a prodigious height and bulk, especially in the fens of Huntingdonshire,[6] copses of alders and birches,[7] clusters of aspens beside the streams, and extensive beds of sallows, osiers,[8] and the basket rush. Here and there were large watery plains covered with reeds, while the sandy downs along the sea-shore, impregnated with saline breezes, yielded

[1] Introduction to Domesday, I. 121-125.

[2] Id., I. 126, sqq.

[3] Evelyn, Silva, p. 194.

[4] Our Saxon ancestors frequently in their Dooms estimated the value of a tree according to the number of hogs that could stand under it. "If any one cut down a tree under which thirty swine may stand, and it be discovered, let him pay sixty shillings." Laws of King Ine, 44.

[5] Yet the oak is only thrice mentioned by name in the Domesday Survey. Sir Henry Ellis, I. 101.

[6] Historia Ramesiensis, III. 385.

[7] Of this tree Evelyn remarks, that "the parts of the forest that hardly bear any grass do frequently produce it in abundance." Silva, p. 78.

[8] Introduction to Domesday, *ubi supra.*

an abundance of sedge which, as it waved and sighed in the wind, inspired the wandering chapman, the solitary anchorite, and the forlorn serf with profound melancholy. Gloom indeed, by foreigners, is deemed to be the characteristic of our whole nation, from which, if true, our superior thoughtfulness may be inferred, since, while we meditate on the price paid for freedom, they fiddle, dance and sing in the shackles of servitude.

Some counties were famous for the yew and the box,[2] as Kent and Surrey, where with these and the holly whole ridges of hills were in former times so thickly clothed, that they suggested all the year round the idea of eternal spring. One of the favourite spots of the holly is a sheltered valley called Holmes-Dale, near the course of the Mole or Swallow, where, as I have already observed,[3] Ethelwulf and his son Ethelbald defeated the Danes with immense slaughter. Now no foreign armies traversed the land, and safe under the protection of the sons of Godwin, the yeoman and the labourer tilled their fields in peace, or enjoyed their rustic sports in the woodlands of Wessex. In various parts of the island, down to a very late period, enormous trees, oaks, elms, ashes and yews, evidently the relics of primeval woods, imparted an air of antiquity and grandeur to the landscape. Some of these were nearly sixty feet in circumference, others eighty-one feet in the spread of their branches, affording five hundred and sixty square yards of shade, and capable of sheltering from sun or shower two thousand four hundred and twenty men.

Protected by ancient superstition and its own grotesque aspect, the thorn rose here and there on marly or stony acclivities, throwing forward its branches with the prevailing wind, and suggesting ideas of the Scan-

[1] Ducange quotes from the Lives of the Saints the following passage: "Ad quandam insulam diversis, ne moribus, stagnis et *carectis* variis devenit, nomine Croylandiam." Voce *Carectum*.

[2] Evelyn, Silva, pp. 155, 157, 199.

[3] See vol. I. 227.

dinavian divinity to which it was sacred.[1] On the arable plains, with two mounted horses yoked to the plough[2], the Saxon churls turned up the rich furrows, or in autumn reaped the heavy wheat, or gathered and piled up in heaps the ruddy apples in their orchards. In spots well sheltered and favoured by the sun, vineyards[3] were beheld, from the produce of which wine, though not of a very superior quality, continued to be made down to a late period. In the midst of all this industry and plenty, cities, towns, villages, and hamlets abounded.

But, besides its secular life, England, even then, in spite of ignorance, had another life, which hallowed its aspect and endeared it doubly to the hearts of its people. More than half the beauty of every country is communicated to it by its religion. England, in the Confessor's time, was thickly studded with monasteries, convents, and vast churches, erected in the most lovely of its vallies, on the summits of rugged rocks, on wild cliffs overhanging the sea, or amidst the green foldings of its picturesque hills. Heaven-pointing spires, lofty and venerable turrets, with all the splendour of architecture, flashed upon the eye of the pilgrim in whatever direction he might journey, and songs and solemn music celebrated the birth and close of each day, and threw their soft witchery into the night. In the Pagan world, every hill, grove, or fountain was hallowed by the footsteps of some God; and the beautiful spots of our own land were no less hallowed by the constant presence of God's worshippers, whose devotion, however ignorant, was still devotion, and directed the heart to the fountain of all happiness.

[1] Sacre. Mr. Stevenson, Preface to the Abingdon Chronicle, II. xxx.

[2] Laws of King Athelstan, 16.

[3] Introduction to Domesday, I. 116. Sir Henry Ellis observes that vineyards are mentioned thirty-eight times in the Domesday Survey, in spite of which some writers have imagined that by vineæ, orchards, are meant. But Spelman decides the question, by observing that one of these vineæ produced twenty modii of Wine. Gloss., p. 44.

The monasteries had more than resumed their ancient splendour, and their domains, more carefully cultivated than any of the surrounding estates, led the way in agricultural improvement, and insured large revenues to the lord abbot and his subjects.[1]

One of the most remarkable characteristics of an English landscape at this period, was the prodigious number of bees[2] which swarmed in almost every copse and grove, and diffused themselves in spring and summer over the wild flowers of the meadows, over the parterres of the monastic gardens, over the variegated bloom of the fruit trees, and generally wherever the earth had put forth blossoms or was sprinkled with dew.[3] Honey accordingly constituted a large article of English commerce, and was consumed partly in the manufacture of mead, partly in preparing those innumerable forms of pastry,[4] confectionary, and other dainties, in which our ancestors, more especially the monks, delighted.

As little value was then set on intellectual pleasures, the necessity of some occupation to fill up the vacant hours led to an assiduous application to the chase. The king himself, after his long acts of devotion and theological discussions with the clergy,[5] lived more in the company of hawks and hounds[6] than of men. His mind was incapable of interesting itself in politics, in

[1] See Mr. Stevenson's preface to the Abingdon Chronicle, II. xxx., and *passim*.

[2] Among the assistants in husbandry we find enumerated the Apium Custos, or keeper of bees. Sir Henry Ellis's Introduction to Domesday, I. 94.

[3] The counties in which bees appear to have most abounded, were those of Oxford, Warwick, Norfolk, and Leicester. Introduction to Domesday, I. 193, sqq.

[4] See on sacred pastry, Le Grand d'Aussy, Histoire de la Vie Privée des François, II. 301, sqq. "Le jour de la Pentecôte, lorsqu'on entonnoit le Veni Creator pour la Messe, des gens placés à la voûte de l'église faisoient descendre sur le peuple des étouppes enflammés, et jettoient en même temps des feuilles de chêne ou des fleurs, et des nieules ou des oublies."

[5] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[6] When the king went to hunt, one person from each house in Hereford repaired to the stand or station in the wood. Introduction to Domesday, I. 195.

the arts of government, in watching over the administration of justice, or in promoting plans for the welfare of his people. These duties he abandoned to his earls and bishops, while he himself wandered through the vales and woodlands, which then possessed a wild beauty no longer to be found in the civilised portions of Europe.

Canute, by his Forest Laws,[1] had carefully provided for the wild sports of his successors, by hedging round the royal woods with a cordon of pains and penalties, and an organised body of foresters, to see that his laws in this respect were strictly put in execution. By this ferocious conqueror the lives and liberties of ordinary men were estimated at so cheap a rate, that for killing a stag in the royal forest, freemen, according to their rank, were condemned to one or two years imprisonment, while the serf lost his life. Even unintentionally to cause one of these favoured animals to run till it panted was visited in a freeman with a fine of ten shillings, while from a person of humbler grade twenty shillings were extorted. The unhappy serf, despised and persecuted by his master, and possessing no property which the vindictive law could seize upon, was subjected, like the inferior animals, to scourging. The language of the Saxon law, which may be said in some respects to have been improved by Canute, speaks habitually of serfs with inhuman recklessness, ordaining that for various offences the man who had lost his liberty should be liable "in his hide." To preserve the delicate animals of the royal chase from being alarmed and made to run, the breath of terror was diffused around the forest, and the unhappy peasant who accidentally disturbed one of these pampered brutes, was to have his skin lacerated with stripes. In this state the Forest Laws passed down from the victor at Assandun to the victor at Hastings, who may be truly said to have

[1] See Ancient Laws and Institutions of England, p. 183, 184. Kemble, Saxons in England, II. 78, sqq.

written his additions to them in blood. The monkish partner of Editha does not lie open to the charge of similar vindictiveness and ferocity, for though he enjoyed the chase, he does not appear to have interdicted the same pleasure to others.

When the inclemency of the weather confined men to their houses or castles, their time, since they possessed no taste for books, would have hung very heavily on their hands, had they not been capable of deriving entertainment from feasting and drinking, in which a large portion of their lives was passed. To enhance their pleasures and promote digestion, the aid of buffoons, jugglers, and minstrels[1] was called in, and these, wandering from town to town and castle to castle, assisted our heavy forefathers in getting through the twenty-four hours without dying of that ennui to which all barbarians are subject. Occasionally, however, they took to less innocent amusements, such as bear-baiting, to which, in some parts, the baiting of bulls was added. In Edward's time, the city of Norwich was bound by ancient custom to present annually a bear and six bear-dogs to the king, from which we must infer that the saintly Confessor some times exhilarated his leisure hours by witnessing the bloody combat between bruin and the English dogs.[2]

From the time of Edmund Ironside, we notice the existence of a professional fool at court, where he throve and became opulent by turning to account the folly of others. This father of English jesters bore the appropriate name of Hit-hard, and, considering the thickness of the wits with which he had generally to deal, hard-hitting must have been needed to produce any effect. Growing rich by the generosity of those whom he amused, and, as lord of Chertham and Walworth, en-

[1] "Poetæ qui cantilenis eorum alliciunt homines manifeste ad Jocalia, intus vero latet anguis." Ducange, *voce Jocale.*

[2] Introduction to Domesday, I. 206.

joying his dignity during thirty years, he at length became conscious of the sin of misapplying his mental faculties for the entertainment of drones and idlers, and, being seized with a fit of penitence, offered up all his worldly wealth on the altar of Canterbury cathedral, after which he proceeded on pilgrimage to Rome, where he probably ended his days.[1]

We may imagine, therefore, with what joy the whole court hailed the intelligence that king Griffith,[2] with an army of Welshmen, had burst across the border, and was harrying and devastating the fertile county of Hereford. To the bishopric of that city, Harold had recently appointed his own mass-priest,[3] Leofgar, a man after his own heart,[4] who had never laid aside his knapsack,[5] but cultivated equally the study of divinity and that of arms. No less glad was he than the nobles to have the monotony of his life dissipated by the excitement of conflict. Laying aside, therefore, his chrism and his rood—the ghostly weapons of his profession—and taking to the more congenial spear and battle-axe, he placed himself at the head of his martial clergy, and hastened to encounter Griffith in the Marches. This, however, he did in an evil hour. The Welsh invasion took place amid the great heats of summer, and Griffith's army, consisting of hardy mountaineers inured to labour and fatigue, appears to have been numerous and formidable. He deployed, therefore, on descending into the plains, and, dividing his forces into separate columns, directed them to take different routes, and penetrate into England on many points at once. This perplexed the tactics of Edward's commanders, whose troops were worn down by marching and countermarching, now to defend one town,

[1] Dr. Doran, History of Court Fools, p. 99: an interesting and curious work.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1056.

[3] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 188.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1056.

[5] Matthew, of Westminster, A.D. 1056, pronounces the eulogium of this prelate, who, he says, "was a lover of churches, a reliever of the poor, a defender of widows and orphans, and a helper of the oppressed."

now another, sometimes beholding the flames of war bursting forth in their front, sometimes in their rear. Suddenly enveloped by the Welsh army, a large division of the king's forces, commanded by the bishop of Hereford, the sheriff of the county, and other gentlemen, was cut off with all its leaders, after which the Welsh prince continued his march into England. It was now thought necessary to send against him the greatest generals in the kingdom, Harold, Leofric, and bishop Aldred, by whom Griffith's advance was checked. It does not, however, appear that any great advantage was obtained over him by arms. Terms were settled by negociation,[1] and Griffith having agreed to hold the crown of Wales in subordination to Edward, the campaign concluded, and the armies returned to their homes.

Much obscurity envelopes the relations in which, during times of peace, the Kymri and the English stood towards each other. That there always existed great jealousy and aversion is indisputable: the Welshman found in arms beyond Offa's Dyke, after Harold's expedition into the mountains, forfeited his right hand; while the Saxon who, without observing the established regulations, crossed the Wye, probably exposed himself to analogous punishment. A convention has come down to us which, though clear perhaps when it was drawn up, is now as enigmatical as the vaticinations of an oracle. From it, however, we learn, that a court existed on the frontier composed of twelve judges, half Welsh, half English, who administered justice in all disputes between individuals of the two nations. Commercial intercourse, though sanctioned by the law, and placed under its protection, seems, nevertheless, to have been carried on with difficulty. There were fixed stations on the border, to which traders who desired to pass with their goods from one country into the other, were bound to repair; having stated their intentions,

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1056.

they were permitted to cross the frontier under the guidance and safeguard of an officer appointed by the government, who accompanied them throughout their journey, and was responsible for their safety, as well as for that of their property till they had transacted their business, after which he brought them back to the station from which they had set out. For any loss of property or injury to the person sustained by the traders during their journey, the officer in charge was answerable, and the damages were assessed by the double commission.[1]

After this irruption, England again returned to a state of profound peace, during which, A.D. 1061,[2] both Harold and his brother Tostig, influenced no less, perhaps, by policy than by devotion, undertook a pilgrimage to Rome.[3] Kynsey,[4] archbishop of York, having died in 1060, Aldred, bishop of Worcester, was nominated to succeed him, and was, therefore, under the necessity of proceeding beyond sea for his pall.[5] Tostig, his fortunate and happy wife, and his brother Gurth, attended by a numerous and splendid train, accompanied archbishop Aldred. Crossing the Channel, and entering Germany, they travelled through Saxony and along the banks of the Upper Rhine, and passing the Alps, descended into Italy. In obedience to such ideas of piety as then prevailed, Tostig and his countess, influenced partly, perhaps, by their companion the archbishop, visited all the celebrated shrines on their route, and at each left lasting tokens of their devotion and munificence. Thus journeying, and scattering around them the gold of England, they reached the Eternal City.

Harold, meanwhile, whose mind was of a higher order,

[1] Ordinance respecting the Dunsetas.

[2] The Canon of Wells, Anglia Sacra, I. 559, antedates the journey of Gyso and Walter to Rome, which he places in 1060; but Wharton, in his note on the passage, shows that as they accompanied Aldred, it must have been in 1061, since he was not elected archbishop of York till that year.

[3] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 410.

[4] Rudborne, Historia Major Wintoniensis, I. 240.

[5] Willelm. Malmesbur. Vita S. Wulfstani, Anglia Sacra, II. 250.

and who even then distinctly saw before him the glitter of the English crown, proceeded into France.[1] He could not be ignorant of the designs of the Norman duke, and therefore sought to assure himself friends among the natural enemies of William. Between the French and Normans, hatred and jealousy were hereditary,[2] though time had already somewhat diminished their force. He hoped, however, by the serenity and urbanity which he breathed about him like an atmosphere, to make himself friends among the Gallic princes, and travelled, therefore, from court to court, meeting everywhere with the distinguished reception due equally to his personal qualities and his illustrious name. It may be conjectured from an allusion in the Chronicle to the many snares[3] he shunned by his prudence and foresight, that there were those who plotted his destruction. For the time their machinations proved fruitless. Harold arrived safely at Rome, where, in obedience to the spirit of the age, with which his own spirit seems not to have been in harmony, he visited the resting places of the saints, which he enriched by magnificent donations. His religion, fostered in the bosom of the English Church, seems to have been scarcely akin to that of the Continent. In its simplicity and freedom from superstition, it anticipated the far distant dawn of the Reformation, and therefore, in spite of his utmost caution, he may have suffered indications to have escaped from him at Rome, which inclined the Pontiff and the Cardinals to side afterwards with his more crafty rival, and throw the whole weight of the Church into the scale against him.[4]

Even towards the English prelates a strong prejudice existed in the papal court. Objection was taken to the

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 410.

[2] Palgrave, History of Normandy and England, II. 236.

[3] "Per medios insidiantes cautus derisor more suo Dei gratia pervenit ad propria." Idem., *ubi supra.*

[4] Matthew of Westminster distinctly relates that the pope and the cardinals hated Harold, because of his contempt for ecclesiastical despotism: A.D. 1066.

form of Aldred's elevation to the see of York, more especially his holding at the same time the bishopric of Worcester;[1] and he was, therefore, not only refused the pall, but degraded from his archbishopric. This was the more surprising, inasmuch as Tostig, under whose auspices he came to Rome, was received and entertained, with peculiar honour by Pope Nicholas, who, in a synod, held soon after his arrival, placed him in the seat of greatest dignity by his side. Two other prelates, Gyso, bishop of Wells, and Walter, bishop of Hereford,[2] who had likewise come in the earl's company to be confirmed in their sees, were successful in their application. Touched by the disgrace of the archbishop, the ancient friend of his House, and resolved to leave no means untried to remove the objections of the papal court, Tostig prolonged his stay at Rome; but, for reasons which have not been explained, sent back his countess with a regal train and strong escort to England, which she reached in safety.

Finding his efforts unavailing, the earl at length quitted the Eternal City with his friends, and entered upon the Campagna. He had not, however, proceeded far on the road to Sutrium, in Etruria[3] before he discovered some of the natural fruits of priestly government.

The fertile and beautiful land, once so safe and peaceful under Republican Consuls, had now been converted into a den of brigands, who had their strongholds in every mountain, and swarmed in every forest. Even in Rome itself, which had long been enriched and corrupted by the plunder of Christendom, there was no safety for any but such as were well prepared to defend themselves with arms. A majority of the citizens had degenerated

[1] Willelm. Malmesbur., Anglia Sacra, II. 250.

[2] These were the two prelates who afterwards, in A.D. 1070, consecrated Lanfranc to the archbishopric of Canterbury. Diceto, de archiepiscopis Cantuariensibus, Ang. Sac., II. 684. Gyso died in A.D. 1088. Idem., I. 559.

[3] Liv. Hist., XXVI. 34. Vell. Patercul. I. 13. Cramer, Description of Ancient Italy, I. 234.

into thieves and assassins, who, contracting through familiarity, a contempt for everything connected with the superstition by which they were themselves pampered and depraved, and regarding pilgrims as persons wholly without understanding, attacked them in the churches, robbing them, if possible, before they had made their offerings, if not, snatching away their oblations even from the very altar.[1] These miscreants, who reverenced nothing human or divine, could not be expected to display any deference towards each other, and accordingly, when any disagreement arose respecting the division of the plunder, not only drew their swords in the churches, but stabbed each other over the tombs and altars of the apostles,[2] which they esteemed no better than any other bricks or stones.

Tradition attributes to Pope Gregory the Sixth[3] the desire to put an end to this disgraceful state of things. The policy he pursued, however, being susceptible of more than one interpretation, his friends bestowed the name of wholesome severity on what his enemies denounced as barbarous cruelty. Irritated at beholding the emptiness of his treasury, Gregory organised a force with which he assailed the brigands, on the highways, in the streets, and even in the sanctuaries of religion;[4] but with the guilty, he may sometimes, perhaps, have confounded the innocent. At any rate, the people of Rome began to clamour against the spirit of his government, and their sentiments, whether just or unjust, being shared by the cardinals themselves,

[1] *Henry de Knyghton*, p. 2327.

[2] *William of Malmesbury*, II. 13.

[3] *This pontiff* purchased the tiara from his relative, Benedict IX., of whom it is related, that falling in love with one of his cousins, whom he demanded in marriage of her father, Gerard of the Rock, and being unable to obtain her on any other terms, relinquished the papacy for the woman. Milman, History of Latin Christianity, II. 426. The date of Gregory's purchase is not exactly fixed, but is generally supposed to have taken place in 1044, and his deposition in 1046, though the Chronologia Augustinensis places it in 1048.

[4] Diceto Abbreviationes Chronicorum, p. 471.

Gregory was denounced and deposed[1] as a tyrant, and another infallible statesman and theologian elected to fill his place. Change of pontiffs, however, produced no change in the incidents of Roman life. Wherever the rulers of a country are priests, there will always be malversation and misgovernment; consequently whatever may have been the efforts of Gregory's successors to keep open the way to Rome, in order that bigotry and imbecility might transport thither the spoils of Christendom, they failed in their design. Bold and dissolute men, observing by what acts of fraud and delusion the papal exchequer was replenished, concluded by an easy species of logic, that it could not be very criminal to participate in the wealth thus accumulated. Besides, priests were always at hand to absolve, for a small fraction of the plunder, the bandit from his guilt, and to furnish him in his last hour with a safe passport to heaven. Accordingly no surprise can be felt at the dangers which beset travellers in the Campagna, or at the disorders and crimes which imparted to Rome the aspect of a brigand's lair, filled with mercenary beauty, abounding with cheap means of penance, and redolent from time immemorial of blood and lust.

On the very day of their departure, the travellers were stopt on the road. A youthful nobleman, related to his brother-in-law, king Edward, and habitually residing at Rome, had come forth to accompany Tostig across the plains, and rode at the head of the cavalcade. As he was of handsome person, splendidly dressed and mounted, the brigands mistook him for earl Tostig himself, and he confirmed them in their error by confessing that he was the man. They therefore took him prisoner in the hope of obtaining a large ransom, and sending him to the rear,

[1] After his deposition, the simoniacal pontiff, whom Dr. Milman calls the Didius Julianus of the papacy, proceeded under compulsion to pass the remainder of his days in a German monastery, and strange to say, was accompanied in his retreat by the famous Hildebrand. History of Latin Christianity, II. 428.

under a strong guard, attacked the rest of the party, bishops and all, whom they plundered, stripped some naked, and in that condition drove back to the papal capital.[1] The captive nobleman, on whom the chronicler bestows the name of Gaius, as soon as he considered the earl and his friends in safety, confessed the stratagem he had put in practice. At first the enraged robbers threatened him with death; but being in truth only soldiers whom papal despotism had driven to despair, they soon forgave the cheat which had been put upon them, admired and praised his courage and fidelity, and restoring the whole of his property, dismissed him from their fortress with every mark of honour and respect.

Aldred, meanwhile, found his advantage in what had threatened his destruction; for the pope affecting to pity his misfortunes, once more assembled the cardinals, and, after due deliberation, reversed the former verdict, invested him with the pall, and granted in all other matters the request of the English king. This he did chiefly to appease earl Tostig, who, enraged by the obstacles he had encountered, and still more, perhaps, by the indignities which had been offered him by the papal brigands, fiercely, in the spirit of his uncle Canute, threatened his holiness with the entire loss of those revenues, which, under the name of Peter's Pence, he derived annually from England. "Who," he inquired, "will care for your excommunication at a distance, if a handful of robbers set you at naught at your own door? If my property be not restored to me, I shall believe that you have shared the plunder, and that the crime is as much yours as theirs. Besides, when the king of England hears of these things, he will put an effectual stop to the transmission of those revenues which you have hitherto derived from his subjects, especially if the archbishop of York be permitted to return despoiled and dishonoured to his country.[2]

[1] Vita Edwardi Regis, p. 412.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 282. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 952. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2336.

Subdued by these menaces, the pope, concealing his fears under the mask of benevolence, addressed to the earl[1] a most gracious allocution, heaping upon him at the same time blessings and rich presents from the treasury of St. Peter, and, with kind and affectionate professions, dismissed him in peace. This time, moreover, Tostig and his friends were sufficiently fortunate to escape his holiness's banditti, and return, without interruption, to England, where they were received with general rejoicing.

During the absence of the earls Harold and Tostig, the peace of the kingdom was disturbed at once in the North and in the West; for Malcolm of Scotland made a destructive foray into Northumbria, as far as Lindisfarne,[2] while Griffith, king of Wales, renewed his depredations along the Marches. Edward, who then held his court at Gloucester, consented to the organising of a new expedition against Wales. Griffith had connected himself by marriage[3] with the rival House of Mercia, having taken to wife Editha, daughter of Algar. This connexion, probably, originated in the policy of attempting to counterbalance the influence of the Godwins by an alliance between the royal family of Wales and the House of Leofric. Its immediate consequence, however, was war. Harold, at the head of a chosen body of cavalry, made a sudden irruption into Flintshire, burned Griffith's palace of Rhuddlan, with the town which surrounded it, and all the naval stores and ships then in harbour,[4] Griffith himself escaping by sea with extreme difficulty.[5] The total subjugation of the principality was now resolved upon, and Harold, instructed by experience, adopted a new system of tactics, dress, and arms. Having discovered that the heavy equipment of the

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 412. Willelm. Malmsbur. (De Vita S. Wulstani, Anglia Sacra, II. 250), who describes the earl, "Magnas efflantem minas."

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 190.

[3] Guil. Gemet., VII. 31.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1063.

[5] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1063.

English, unfitted them for service in a rugged mountainous country, whose inhabitants were accustomed to the most daring and rapid evolutions, he introduced a much lighter armour, fabricated of boiled leather,[1] which, being at once thick and flexible, protected the wearers, while it enabled them to advance or retreat with celerity. Their weapons seem to have been only a sword and light spear.

The command of this expedition was divided between the brother earls, Harold directing the movements of the naval armament, while Tostig entered the country at the head of the Northumbrian horse.[2] Indulging in his natural fierceness, the northern earl devoted the whole land to fire and sword, and left behind him nothing but one broad track of desolation; while Harold, moving along the coast with his fleet, landed suddenly, from time to time, and giving up towns and villages to conflagration, invested the unhappy Kymri with a belt of fire. Nevertheless, in defence of their homes, they everywhere fought and bled; but the English force being altogether overwhelming, they bled in vain. Victory almost invariably declared for the invaders, and pillars rose thickly along the coast, with the proud inscription, "Here Harold conquered!"[3] Tostig's operations have not been particularly described; but between the two leaders a system so destructive was developed, that nearly all the Welsh of military age, with a majority of the youth and even boys, perished, leaving little besides old men, women, and children, to preserve the once dreaded name of the Cimbri. While pursuing this sanguinary policy, little thought the conquerors that in scarcely more than three years they themselves would be followed and hunted down in like manner by a foe still more merciless than themselves. For the time, however, their triumph was complete, and

[1] "Corium coctum." Historia Ingulphi, I. 68.

[2] Vitæ Ædwardi Regis, pp. 416, 425. Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1063.

[3] Giraldus Cambrensis in Anglia Sacra, II. 451.

produced a partial blending of the hostile races; numerous intermarriages took place between the invaders and the Welsh ladies, no men of their own nation being left to take them to wife. Griffith, the fearless and indomitable king, having been shortly afterwards deposed and murdered, his head, together with the golden beak of his galley,[1] was sent to Harold, who laid the bloody trophy at the feet of the pious Edward.[2] Griffith's widow, a lady of singular beauty, sister to the youthful earls Edwin and Morcar, he took to be his own wife,[3] and thus sought to extinguish the feud which had so long raged between the Houses of Godwin and Leofric. Edward's sovereignty being thus established in Wales, he pursued the insidious policy of dividing the royal authority between two brothers, Blethgent and Ruthlan,[4] in order that dissension and civil discord might be perpetuated, and do the work of the foreign sword.

Harold, who already exercised regal power, though in Edward's name, to gratify the taste of his brother-in-law, caused to be erected for him in Wales a splendid hunting-lodge, in which he might reside when he proceeded thither to enjoy his favourite pastime in the mountains and woodlands.[5] But Caradoc, the son of Griffith, who had escaped the massacre of his kindred, appearing suddenly at the head of a few followers, slew the workmen, demolished the lodge, and bore away to his fastnesses the booty he had won.[6] This incident, however, though it circumscribed the range of the royal pleasures, interfered very little with Edward's passion for the chase, since he had parks and hunting-lodges in nearly every part of the kingdom, and while all public business was carried on by Harold and his

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 426. Historia Ingulphi, I. 68. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1064.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1064. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1063.

[3] Guillaume de Jumiège, VII. 31.

[4] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1064. William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[5] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1064. Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1065.

[6] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1065.

brothers, spent his time at one or other of these rural seats.

When not actually engaged in following the dogs and falcons Edward devoted his leisure to the society of monks[1] and priests, especially those of France and Normandy.[2] What their conversation chiefly turned upon we may conjecture from the writings bequeathed to us by men of their order.[3] In the heroic times of Hellas, princes and nobles amused themselves with the adventures of Gods and Heroes, sung to them in hall and bower by the bards. With the substitution of new machinery, the courtly tastes, up to the eleventh century, in England, continued the same; only for Zeus, Ares and Aphrodite, were substituted saints and hermits, whose miracles, mythes, and legends illuminated the dark hours of winter by the fireside. These narratives, quickened by the grotesque spirit of the North, enlivened alike palace and monastery, castle and cottage. The monks reaped a golden harvest from Edward's credulity: they delighted his ears by narratives of strange miracles, which in those ages were multiplied with lavish profusion, and he rendered them still happier by filling their scrips and wallets with good English money. From his presence, therefore, they habitually retired, their minds brimful of joy, to diffuse the fame of his munificence, not only over the whole breadth of England, but throughout Europe, even to the Maremma and the Pontine bogs.[4]

It would be unjust to deny to this king the praise due to the virtue of charity. His solicitude for the welfare of the poor was active and sincere, and the simple life he led enabled him more completely to gratify it. In monkish habits he excelled the monks

[1] Mr. Luard's translation of the Metrical Life of Edward the Confessor, p. 206.

[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[3] Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, De Vita et Miraculis Edwardi Confessoris, pp. 375, 376, where he makes of Edward a complete prince of Utopia.

[4] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 414.

themselves, and no wonder, since what they carried on as a trade he followed as a passion. For the pomps of his royal position, he had no care, though he submitted to act his part in them when it was judged necessary, arrayed in garments embroidered by his queen in gold.[1] Editha's conduct was regulated by much the same principles. Calamity, persecution, and the discords of her husband and father, had embittered her youth, and driven her to seek for happiness in the pleasures of the mind, and the exercise of virtue, piety, and beneficence. Still in all courtly duties and ceremonies she was distinguished for the majesty as well as the grace of her manners, so that all who frequented her husband's palace, or beheld her perform her part in public, went away impressed with the conviction that she was the happiest, as well as the noblest of women. Her generosity and munificence knew no bounds; yet her gentle humanity was grievously tried by her husband's narrow and quaint notions of a holy life. To realise his theory of charity, he did not consider it sufficient to erect and endow all over the kingdom establishments where the poor might receive shelter and subsistence; he converted his own palace into a species of hospital or lazar house, crowded with the sick, the infirm, the maim, the halt, and the blind, upon whom he was persuaded by his monastic counsellors to attempt the working of miracles; and if by care, cleanliness, and a regular supply of wholesome food, any persons were restored to health, the fact was immediately attributed to supernatural influences, and the credulous monarch was the first to put faith in his own wonder-working powers. Scrofula was supposed to be healed by his touch, and his monkish Chroniclers vie with each other in celebrating the number and importance of his miraculous cures.[2]

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[2] His acts of charity, and miraculous cures, are dwelt upon at great length by the author of the Metrical Life of Edward, p. 232.

The terms on which he lived with his consort[1] are difficult to be understood. According to some, their domestic life must have been cold and dreary, not only void of love, but even of that affection and common kindness which often supply the place of it. By his sacerdotal favourites, he was urged to sting her like a viper, to deprive her of all worldly possessions, to thrust her forth from under his roof, to condemn her to imprisonment, coercion and penance. He had married her from policy, and revenged upon her innocent head the craft and abject fear which had betrayed him into the act. Yet when her father, the object of his terror and aversion, was removed, Editha's natural sweetness and goodness seem gradually to have inspired him with gentler sentiments towards her. With a patience surpassing that of Griselda, she endured his unkind treatment, conforming her behaviour in all things to his wishes, tolerating his superstitious weaknesses, outdoing him in real piety, prompting him to acts of goodness, encouraging his munificence to the Church, and skilfully directing from herself to him all the credit of her own bounteous deeds.[2]

By pursuing, from motives of benevolence, a course which the profoundest policy might have dictated, she at length acquired an unbounded influence over her husband's mind. Her brothers he loved for their own sakes. Harold, with all his brilliant, amiable, and gentle qualities, could hardly fail to inspire friendship wherever he was known. Edward's attachment to the fierce, fiery, vindictive Tostig, is less intelligible; yet he appears to have been his greatest favourite, the person in whose

[1] It is said by Edward's monkish biographers, that a compact was entered into by him and Editha, of *which God only was witness*, that she should remain in his palace for ever a vestal. Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 378. It is far more probable, as Malmesbury (II. 13) conjectures, that he at first abstained from cohabiting with her through hatred of her family, and was afterward confirmed in the habit by the sinister influence of foreign monks. See also Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1066.

[2] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 415.

society he most delighted, who accompanied him in his hunting parties, who was seldom long absent from his palace, where he likewise exercised a strong influence over Editha herself. It was the existence of this powerful bond of affection between the brother and sister, that afterwards suggested the calumny respecting the assassination of Cospatric, whom the queen was accused of taking off, to gratify the earl of Northumbria.[1]

Of Edward's domestic life we can form but an imperfect idea. At table and in church, however, we are told that Editha sat by his side; but, at other times, when in company, she usually placed herself on a stool at his feet. In spite of his natural solemnity, he was occasionally possessed by the desire to be playful, and at such times would nod to his beautiful queen to rise from her humble position and sit beside him. If she lingered, he stretched forth his long bony white hand, and gently drew her up to the royal seat.[2] The chronicler to whom we are indebted for these particulars was evidently familiar at the palace, and no doubt had often witnessed what he describes. Notwithstanding, however, her piety and the blamelessness of her life, her chastity was suspected, and the slander pursued her to her death-bed, on which, when about to breathe her last, she solemnly called heaven to witness that she had always conducted herself with all reverence to the marriage vow and the duty she owed her husband.[3]

Among Editha's claims to the gratitude of the Church must be reckoned her rebuilding the monastery of Wilton, in which she had been educated, and where she had acquired those graces and accomplishments which enabled her to shine as England's queen. This very ancient structure had been repaired and enlarged by St. Editha, king Edgar's daughter by a nun; but it was still of wood. Edward's queen, therefore, observing the

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1065.

[2] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 415.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

improvements which had been made in architecture, determined to replace the ancient mouldering edifice with a building of stone, in whose shady aisles and cloisters they whom she had once regarded as sisters might live in greater comfort and security. The consecration of churches and monasteries supplied our ancestors, as the Olympic Games did the Greeks, with an occasion of meeting together in great numbers. Prelates and nobles, abbots, monks, nuns, with crowds of people from all the country round, thronged the pleasant banks of the Willey, to witness the ceremony of consecration, and listen to the singing and the music which celebrated the mystical union of the nuns with their heavenly spouse. But the dwellers in the ancient Ellandune had reason to regret the architectural revolution in the monastery, since, through the carelessness probably of the workmen, a conflagration was kindled by which the whole village, obviously of timber, was burnt to the ground.

While the queen was engaged in these peaceful occupations, a sanguinary rebellion arose in her brother Tostig's earldom. He himself was at Britford[1] with the king when intelligence of the insurrection was brought him. The circumstances attending the outbreak have been differently described and explained. As far as the monuments of the times enable us to form a judgment, there was no little fault on both sides; the temper of the earl was harsh and austere, and he exercised his authority with a severity which often degenerated into cruelty. The people, nevertheless, over whom he had to rule were at once ferocious and turbulent, whose love of liberty[2] habitually assumed the character of licentiousness, and among whom blood-feuds, assassinations, private wars, marauding, and brigandage, universally prevailed. Even the long and stern rule of the Danish jarl Siward had failed to restrain their savage propensities, so great

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1065.

[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

was their cruelty and contempt of God and man.[1] In spite of his watchfulness and rigour, neither life nor property was any where in safety. Travelling singly, or in small numbers, was impossible, and even when men journeyed twenty or thirty in a body,[2] they were often attacked and murdered by banditti, who lay in ambush in every copse, in every grove, in every forest, in every ravine, glen, and mountain fastness.

On the accession of Tostig to the earldom, the face of things very soon changed. He caused it to be understood that such offences, whether perpetrated by high or low, would meet with no mercy from him, but that he would visit all evil-doers indiscriminately with torture and death. He kept his word. Executions filled Northumbria with blood; caitiffs and cut-throats fell beneath the axe, which, when need required, was likewise lifted against the great, of whom justice made terrible examples. It has been asserted, perhaps not without reason, that the earl threw too much ferocity into his administration; and without regard to time or place, or often even to the forms of justice, decapitated malefactors whose nobility, in the opinion of the age, should have exempted them from punishment.[3]

But the rigour of his government was, probably, less prejudicial to him than the partiality of Edward, which, by keeping him away from his earldom, in order that he might enjoy his companionship both in the chase and in the palace, necessarily threw the management of the affairs of Northumbria into the hands of his deputies. These, doubtless, often strained their authority, and, casting the responsibility of their acts upon the

[1] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 421.

[2] "Tanta gentis illius crudelitas et Dei incultus habebatur ut vix triginta vel viginti in uno comitatu possent ire, quin aut interficerenter aut deprædarentur ab insidiantium latronum multitudine."—Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 422.

[3] In this category probably stood Ulf and Gamel, whom he caused to be executed, or, as others say, assassinated, in his own palace at York. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1065.

absent earl, indulged their rapacity and their enmities without stint. Other causes, however, concurred to produce the rebellion. An opening appearing to present itself, the heads of the rival family skilfully availed themselves of the occasion to abridge the influence of the Godwins, and increase their own. A conspiracy was, therefore, organised, at the head of which were Edwin and Morcar, to overthrow Tostig, and the leading men of Northumbria, eager to regain their ancient license, armed and called out their retainers.[1]

The insurgents having taken the field marched towards York, where they attacked Tostig's palace,[2] slew his English and Danish huscarls, and, in conformity with their hereditary instincts, plundered his treasures.[3] He was not, however, without friends in the North. Thousands, adhering to their allegiance, were attacked and slaughtered, through enmity to their absent lord, in the streets of York and Lincoln, in the highways, in the open fields, in woods, in rivers,—in short, wherever circumstances brought the hostile factions face to face.[4] To be known to have been a friend of Tostig, or to have shared the hospitality of his palace—even the suspicion of having been so honoured—was equivalent to a sentence of death. Had he himself been present, the rebellion would either never have broken out, or been speedily crushed. As it was, the want of a leader proved fatal to his cause; his enemies grew more numerous and confident every hour, while his friends lost heart, and at length succumbed to the storm. The Northumbrians, sanguinary and rapacious, the old viking blood being still warm in their veins, having slaughtered a large body of Tostig's adherents, precipitated themselves joyfully upon the South, and having desolated the counties of Nottingham, Derby, and Lin-

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1065.
[2] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 761.
[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1065.
[4] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 421. "Fit cædes multorum in Eboraca, vel Lincolnia civitate in plateis, in aquis, in silvis, et in viis."

coln, advanced to Northampton.[1] In this marauding expedition, to which they were partly, perhaps, instigated by the monks and priests, whose privileges and lust of property Tostig appears to have circumscribed, they aimed quite as much at plunder and satiating their border animosities, as at delivering themselves from the dominion of a severe lord. Tumultuous, savage, and buccaneering, they poured across the Humber, pillaging, devastating, slaughtering, making captives of the inhabitants as they marched; and, having rested a while at Northampton, advanced as far as Oxford.[2]

Civil war had commenced, and the atrocities perpetrated by the Northumbrians would have fully justified Edward in arming Wessex and the South, and leading them against the insurgents. He adopted more pacific measures, and, by the advice of earl Tostig[3] himself, sent Harold and other nobles to confer with the leaders of the insurrection, hear the statement of their grievances, and, if possible, bring about a pacification. The commissioners assembled, first at Northampton, and afterwards at Oxford; but the rebel nobles, having been met by ambassadors, where they expected an army, became peremptory and overbearing, threatening the king with hostility, unless he complied with their demands to abrogate the laws enacted by Tostig, and banish their author from the kingdom. English history is full of the sudden vicissitudes of party. From having been all-powerful in the realm, the House of Godwin had now become unpopular, while that of Leofric was in the ascendant. Clearly perceiving this, and being, besides, averse from civil strife, Harold conceded to the Northumbrians the laws of Canute,[4] and, returning

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A. D. 1065. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 193.

[2] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 422.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1065.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1065. The author of the Life of Edward, leaning rather to Tostig than to Harold, appears to have experienced some difficulty in making up his mind respecting the quarrel of the brothers, repeating the accusations against the elder, and refuting

to court, laid the propositions of the Northumbrians before Edward. In such contingencies, the sovereign was not competent to decide without consulting his nobles and clergy. A Witenagemót was, therefore, hastily assembled at Bretheuorde, near Wilton, in which the subject was discussed with much passion and party feeling. All those nobles who leaned to the House of Leofric seized eagerly on the favourable opportunity for striking a blow at the Godwins, not only acusing Tostig of infusing cruelty and barbarity into the administration of justice, but also of prosecuting men in order to obtain possession of their property. It has even been asserted that Harold originated these accusations,[1] though the

them, but in language implying some doubt and hesitation: "Dicebatur quoque, si dignum esset credere, fratris sui Haroldi insidioso, quod absit, suasu hanc dementiam contra ducem suum aggressos esse. Sed ego huic detestabili nequitiæ a tanto principe in fratrem suum non audeo nec vellem fidem adhibere," p. 422. Afterwards, when Harold clears himself from the guilt of such an action, by oath, the author adds: "Sed ille (Haroldus) citius ad sacramenta nimis proh dolor! prodigus hoc objectum sacramentis purgavit." p. 423.

[1] Dr. Lappenberg (II. 271), though he rejects the accusations made against Harold, by hostile chroniclers (Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11; and William of Malmesbury, II. 13), yet appears to lend some countenance to the story of their mutual enmity, by referring to the legends of Ailred de Rievaux, p. 394. This writer, while labouring to elevate the Confessor to a level with the Hebrew prophets, relates a silly story, repeated by several other monks, of the two brothers fighting before him as boys after he had married their sister Editha. The absurdity of the narative at once becomes evident, when it is remembered that Edward never saw them till they were grown up men, and in possession of earldoms—for they were older than their sister, who it is to be presumed was a woman when she became queen. To prove the exactitude of his knowledge, Ailred not only relates that Harold drove Tostig out of England, but that, after the battle of Stamford Bridge, Harold Harfager (Hardrada) made his escape from the field, and returned to Norway with a single vessel. Henry of Huntingdon (p. 761) loses himself in an absolute flood of calumny, while he transposes this memorable adventure to the year A.D. 1063, ten years after Godwin's death. Harold, the recognised heir-apparent to the throne, a general and statesman, far beyond the precincts of youth, is transformed into a cup-bearer, which signal honour so enrages the ruler of two ancient kingdoms, that he flies at his brother and tears him by the hair of his head. Henry, moreover, gives him the palm of seniority, calls his sister Emma, and describes him as exceeding in savageness the fiercest cannibal of New Zealand. Going down to Hereford he slaughters his brother's servants, pickles their heads and arms in jars, and

suspicion is not only baseless, but irreconcileable with all the events of the times. Before this assembly the earl of Northumbria was summoned; he appeared, and by his own oath, and the oaths of his compurgators, cleared himself of the offences laid to his charge. Nevertheless, perceiving the angry temper of the Witan, Edward, in spite of his affection for the earl, gave way. The whole North was in arms, and the excitement he feared might spread through the rest of England; the winter, too, was approaching, which increased the difficulty of collecting an army, and there were those among his friends who strongly dissuaded him from engaging in civil war. Still, he did not yield so much to reason as to necessity. His indignation had been excited, not only on account of his friendship for Tostig, but at seeing his own dignity insulted, and his authority set at naught. Tostig, with all his passions on fire, especially by the suggestion to which in his fury he gave ear, that his own brother had conspired with the rest against him, embarked with his wife, his children, his friends, and whatever treasure he still possessed, and sailed away to his father-in-law, Baldwin, at Bruges.[1]

From this day forward, to the day of his death, Edward never recovered. He had been thrown into a state of high wrought excitement, his pride had been humiliated by having the consciousness of his inability to protect his friends forced upon him. He was immediately seized, therefore, by the lingering malady which terminated in his death. Accusations against Harold were rife, and obtained a wide credence at the time, because, as was thought, he had not interposed his

then jocularly sends to inform the king that when he should come into those quarters he would find plenty of salt meat. Such is the monkish theory of history. However, for this atrocity we are told Tostig was banished the realm; upon which Mr. Petrie obseves: "Hæc ficta videntur: falsa certe sunt quoad causam exilii Tostii, quæ longe alia fuit." Monumenta Britannica, *ubi supra*.

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1065. Saxon Chronicle, *eodem anno*.

power for the rescue of his brother. But the Witenagemót having assembled, and pronounced its judgment, it was no longer a question of kindred or friendship, but of national policy. His enemies, in truth, had prevailed against him, and he was constrained to witness supremacy over one-half of the kingdom pass out of his own family into the hands of rivals and competitors for public favour. This the ignorance and passions of the times concealed from ordinary lookers on, whose partial views and feelings crept into the Chronicles, and long continued to pervert the decisions of history.

For many years Edward had been devoting the tenth of his revenues[1] to the construction of a vast Benedictine monastery at Westminster,[2] and now the close of his life, and of his architectural labours, appeared likely to coincide. This work he had undertaken to obtain a release from his vow of pilgrimage, made when in exile, which the nobles of the kingdom, apprehending troubles during his absence, would not permit him to fulfil. The abbey occupying the site of an ancient temple of Apollo, stood in the Isle of Thorns, on a level sunny spot, surrounded by green meadows and pleasant groves. Near it flowed the noble river on whose broad bosom, as our ancestors were proud to observe, floated the commerce of the world. Here rose the great minster, close to the palace of the English kings, in the midst of a cluster of monastic buildings, chapter-house, cloisters, refectory and pacious dormitories. Nothing of equal splendour had previously been seen in England. The people gazed therefore with awe and wonder at its stupendous towers, its long and lofty arcades, its transepts, its choirs, its chapels, altars, winding staircases, its vast and gorgeously painted windows, flooding the interior with the blazonry of many-

[1] Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, I. 267.

[2] His merit in this work is recognised by Pope Leo, who dwells particularly on the liberality with which he had provided for the comforts of the monks. See the whole of his letter in Ailred de Rievaux, pp. 381, 382.

coloured light.[1] In this magnificent structure, Edward had determined that his own ashes should be deposited, though he now began to fear that the ceremony of consecration could not be completed before his death.

At length the Christmas festival arrived, and notwithstanding his illness, which it was evident must prove fatal, he presided at the royal banquets, affecting cheerfulness in order not to cast a gloom over the customary festivities. But his strength failed so rapidly, that in spite of his earnest desire, he was unable to be present at the consecration of the minster. Editha, therefore, supported by her brother Harold, presided in his stead. But his absence cast a gloom over the ceremony, which had been scarcely ended, ere the principal actors were called upon to attend the king's death-bed.

When Edward felt that he was dying, he said to the queen who sat in tears at his bedside—"Let thanks be given to God, that I am going to be taken." He then added, that his wife had been to him in the place of a beloved daughter, cleaving ever to his side, and fulfilling his wishes. Then pointing with his hand towards Harold, his dear friend and supporter: "This woman," he said, "I commit to thy protection, as well as the whole kingdom. Treat her as thy queen and sister, and let her never be deprived of the honour she has always deserved and received from me. To thee, I likewise recommend all thos who through love for me have left their native land, and have hitherto served me faithfully. Protect them here, if they desire to remain in the enjoyment of all they possess; but should they wish to return to their homes, let them go in safety with whatever belongs to them."

Thus, as far as concerns Edward's wishes, it is clear that he desired to be succeeded by Harold. The historian to whom we are indebted for these particulars,

[1] Vita Eadwardi Regis, p. 417. In the French life of Edward, the windows are said to have been painted with histories. Æstoirés les vereres, V. 2303.

probably the queen's confessor, was in all likelihood present at the scene he describes, and his testimony agrees literally with that of the National Chronicle, in which it is said—

"And the sage ne'ertheless,
The realm committed
To a highly born man.
Harold's self
The noble earl!
He in all time,
Obeyed faithfully
His rightful lord;
By words and deeds,
Nor aught neglected,
Which needful was
To his sovereign lord."[1]

When the king was dead and laid out, his face still retained its rosy colour, while his white beard fell upon his breast like a lily. His eyes being closed, and his hands stretched down by his side, he appeared to be in a sweet sleep.

The character of Edward the Confessor was full of weakness, and therefore full of duplicity. His mind had been corrupted in Normandy, and the events of his life tended rather to aggravate his vices than to deliver him from them. Nearly all princes brought up in exile occupy a false position; they necessarily make friends among foreigners, who, when they are restored to their country, have so many claims upon their gratitude, that it is not a little difficult to satisfy them. Besides, the royal exiles lose their national manners, and in part, perhaps, their language, so that they return home with the ban of foreigners upon them, and find it next to impossible, during their whole lives, to obliterate the impression made by this fact on the minds of their countrymen.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066. The author of the Brevis Relatio having affirmed that Edward refused Harold's entreaties to leave him the crown, shows the little value to be set on his testimony by relating that he took it, and was crowned at St. Paul's, p. 4.—Ed. Giles.

All these unfavourable circumstances applied with unusual force to Edward the Confessor. He had gone abroad when a child, and the natural weakness and timidity of his character had been augmented by the forlorn feeling of dependence. When sent for, therefore, into England by Hardicanute, he came accompanied by Norman adventurers, lay and clerical.[1] Afterwards, when raised to the throne, he invited over hosts of those foreigners, with whom he had far more sympathy than with the English. Hence the misfortunes of his reign, and the incurable calamities brought immediately afterwards upon his country. He was, properly speaking, the author of the last act of the Norman Conquest, the first commenced with the year 787, and therefore there is no name in our history less entitled to the respect of Englishmen.

His superstition reduced him to a level with the lowest bigots and fanatics, but at the same time rendered the monkish chroniclers so enamoured of his life and conversation, that they secretly determined to suggest a parallel between him and Christ. Miracles were of the most familiar occurrence with this patron of celibacy; at the altar the sacramental bread was transformed into the infant Jesus, who spoke to and blessed him;[2] he cured by touch and the sprinkling of water a scrofulous woman,[3] and transmitted to a long line of successors the power of removing the disease, thence called the "king's evil;" he restored sight to the blind, strength to the weak, health to the infirm, and surpassed Calchas himself in the gift of prophecy. The relaters of his actions rival the authors of the Arabian Nights. While present at the dedication of St. John's Church, a mendicant addresses him,[4] and

[1] The Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1049, speaking of one of his promotions observes, "And King Edward gave the bishopric (of Chichester), to Ulf, his priest, and unworthily bestowed it."

[2] Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei, V. 2515, sqq.

[3] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[4] Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei, V. 3453, sqq.

intreats charity; he has no purse, his almoner is absent. What is to be done? Edward looks upon his hand, and beholds there a favourite ring, which he immediately pulls from his finger and gives to the stranger. Two English palmers, happening just then to be in Palestine, lose their way while proceeding towards the Holy Sepulchre. The place in which they find themselves is a desert, where they are overtaken by the night. In their dread and perplexity, an old man with a white beard appears to them, leads them to a comfortable hotel, at which they find plenty to eat and drink, good beds and clean linen; after which their guide informs them that he is John the Evangelist, and by way of proving his veracity, commissions them to restore to Edward the ring which that gracious monarch had given him in a church.

Contrary to what might have been expected, Edward was much given to laughter, occasionally, it must be owned, very much out of season. Thus, one day at mass,[1] while everybody else was impressed with the solemnity of the service, he exploded into a fit of merriment; and upon being asked the reason of his impious cachinnation, replied, that he saw in a vision the Danes and Norwegians entering into a compact to invade England, and by way of ratifying their convention, sitting down together to drink. The cup goes round, giving rise to wild mirth—to this succeeds disputation—to disputation quarrel—to quarrel a fierce conflict, in which both parties are totally disabled from carrying their design against England into execution. "I laughed, therefore," he said, "from the persuasion that no foreigners will be able to effect anything against this country in my time."

But his greatest achievement in the way of joviality occurred at a royal banquet in Westminster, on Easter

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 278. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 378. 949.

Sunday, where his sharp and emaciated features, after having been for a while oppressed by pensiveness, expanded into laughter.[1] At the time no one inquired the cause, but after dinner, Harold, accompanied by a bishop and an abbot—probably under the persuasion that his majesty had become insane—proceeded to his private chamber, and inquired why he had laughed. Edward had again been indulged with a vision, and he replied to the son of Godwin, that being at table, his thoughts had been suddenly transported to the East, during which he saw the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus turn from their right side to their left,[2] which, he said, betokened all sorts of calamities to mankind. Why so disastrous a prospect for his fellow-creatures should excite his laughter, the worthy monarch omitted to explain; but Harold, with philosophical scepticism, being resolved to test his majesty's accuracy, despatched an embassy to Constantinople for the purpose of investigating the attitude of the Sleepers, which was of course found to correspond exactly with the king's vision. It never occurred to the inventors of this legend that they ought to make it harmonise with the original fiction, which relates that the Sleepers retire to their cavern in the reign of the emperor Decius,[3] awake one hundred and eighty-seven years afterwards, in the reign of the younger Theodosius, and then vanish for ever from human sight. According to them the martyred youths were to protract their slumbers indefinitely, and like Enceladus and Typhœus, under Etna, to convulse the world every time they sought ease by turning round in their sleep. With these stories may be classed the anecdote of Canute's placing his regal chair in the waves, for the purpose of convincing his

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1066. Roger of Wendover supposes the cave of the Seven Sleepers to have been in Mount Cœlius, at Rome.

[3] Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (VI. 32), has collected all the authorities for the ancient legend, and related it with his usual force and perspicuity.

courtiers that he was not the omnipotent master of nature.

Edward's treatment of his wife was at once odious and pitiable, and the ingratitude he displayed towards the great earl of Wessex, to whom he owed his crown if not his life, leaves an indelible stain upon his memory. That he endeavoured in the latter part of his reign to make some amends to the Godwin family, and admitted them into his intimate friendship, is true. He lavished titles and favours on Tostig and Gurth, and evidently designated Harold as his successor, though his want of courage and resolution long led him to involve his purpose in mystery.

His historical reputation is chiefly owing to the circumstance that, through the influence of the Godwins, a number of popular and useful laws were enacted or revived during his reign, over which, besides, a melancholy splendour was cast by the fact that, except the few troubled months allotted to the dauntless Harold, his rule, extending almost through a quarter of a century, closed the long and brilliant line of Saxon kings, among whom were some of the best, the bravest, and most generous of mankind.

Edward died on the fifth of January, A.D. 1066, and on the following day, amid the tears and lamentations of the people, was buried in Westminster Abbey, where his tomb is still to be seen.

Controversy, though occasionally needful, disturbs the course of history, and invests it with a dry and repulsive character. But everything is to be hazarded for the sake of truth. Sometime during the latter portion of Edward's reign, Harold is affirmed by many to have taken a step which involved him in the guilt of perjury, and led ultimately to his destruction. Supposing the evidence in favour of this statement to be trustworthy, no puerile desire to defend the last of our Saxon kings

should make us hesitate to adopt it. But is it trustworthy? Is it consistent? Has it any firm basis in chronology? Are the witnesses agreed, either respecting his motives or object, or any of the leading circumstances of the case? Truth wears one form, and is in harmony with itself, as to time, place, persons, and all its other concomitants; whereas falsehood, having no firm foundation on which to stand, and being made up of slippery and impalpable materials, rises before us in a variety of shapes and attitudes, and can by no means be fixed to one position.

It will be immediately perceived that I am about to speak of Harold's supposed visit[1] to Normandy, of his imprisonment at Ponthieu, of his liberation, of his reception at Rouen, of his betrothal, in spite of his having a wife in England, to one of the daughters of William—though whether Adeliza or Agatha no one exactly knows—of his serving in the armies of the duke in various expeditions against Conan earl of Bretagne, of the assembling of the states of Normandy, in whose presence Harold swears over hidden relics to forward William's designs against the liberties of England, though whether this oath was taken at Rouen,[2] at Bonneville-sur-Touque, or at Bayeux,[3] the historians of the transaction are unable to decide; neither is there any better agreement among them respecting the motive, the object, or the date of Harold's voyage. According to some he had, when putting out to sea, no intention to visit Normandy, but

[1] I say *supposed*, though Turner (History of England during the Middle Ages, I. 69) assumes it to have really taken place. Hume (I. 151, 157) takes the same view. Lingard (I. 294, 295), who, though perplexed by the numerous contradictions in the story, selects two facts which he regards as *indisputable*, namely, his release from Ponthieu and his swearing fealty to William. Dr. Lappenberg (II. 267), a calm and impartial writer, though somewhat staggered by the bold assertions of the Norman chroniclers, yet observes, by way of suggesting a decision, that the "strictly Anglo-Saxon authorities" are silent on the subject.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11. Guillaume de Poitiers, in Guizot's Collection, XXIX. 369.

[3] Wace, Roman de Rou, V. 10729.

was bound for Flanders;[1] which, as far as their testimony is concerned, disposes of the supposition that he was commissioned by Edward to apprise the duke of his having been designated successor to the throne of England. A second class of chroniclers send him out in a fishing-boat,[2] and cause him to be driven by a storm on the French coast. According to a third class he proceeds on a pious errand, since his purpose they say was to deliver his brother and nephew from captivity.[3] There is yet a fourth class of historians who represent the great earl of Kent and Wessex, already, in fact, the regent of England, as despatched by Edward, like an ordinary envoy, to make known in Normandy the folly of his own hopes and the baselessness of his own ambition.[4]

So far, it will be observed, there is nothing in the received accounts but confusion and obscurity. When we come to the chronology of the voyage,[5] the variations and contradictions are still more palpable, since we may select for the date of it any point of time from A.D. 1056 to A.D. 1065, some affirming that it took place in the former, some in the latter year; others prefer A.D. 1059; others, 1063; and others, again, 1064.

[1] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 760.

[2] William of Malmesbury, II. 13. Matthew of Westminster, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1059.

[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066. Walter Hemingford, II. 456. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 196.

[4] At the head of these chroniclers stands Ingulph, who, to depreciate Harold, calls him Edward's major domo, but immediately afterwards stultifies himself by speaking of his intended marriage with William's daughter, I. 68. William of Malmesbury (II. 13) observes that this was a commonly received opinion, but that he himself believes Harold to have been driven to France against his will, and to have invented the story of the embassy for his own protection against William's treachery.

[5] Bromton, p. 947, places it in the fourteenth year of Edward, that is, A.D. 1056; Matthew of Westminster and Roger of Wendover in A.D. 1059; Henry of Huntingdon, A.D. 1063; Ranulph, Higden, III. 283, in 1064; Hoveden, Malmesbury, Hemingford, Wace, Simeon of Durham, run through the whole gamut of chronology from the period immediately succeeding the death of Godwin to the period immediately preceding the death of Edward, so little possible did they find it to give any stability or coherence to their fable.

Modern historians, discovering insuperable objections to all the earlier dates, imagine there are fewer obstacles in the way of adjudging the voyage to the last year of Edward's reign.[1] The selection seems unfortunate. At the time of the expedition against Conan, the corn is said to have been almost ripe in the fields, which in Bretagne is never the case till towards the end of August or the beginning of September. Now, from the most unimpeachable of all testimonies,[2] we know that Harold was in Wales during the summer of A.D. 1065, overlooking the erection of the hunting-palace which he undertook to build for the pleasure of his brother-in-law. We may infer, though it is not stated, that Harold left Wales some time before the end of August, because on the 24th of that month Caradoc, son of the murdered king Griffith, whose widow Harold had married, exterminated the earl's workmen, and put a period to the construction of the palace.[3] Immediately after this, that is, early in September, the insurrection took place in Northumbria, when Harold was at hand, ready at the king's request to negociate with the rebels at Northampton.[4]

From this view of the occurrences of A.D. 1065, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to imagine an unoccupied interval lying between midsummer and autumn long enough to admit of our crowding into it all the events which are said to have occurred during Harold's imprisonment at Ponthieu and forced detention in Normandy.[5] The whole story, whether fact or fiction, with

[1] Lappenberg, II. 267. Lingard, I. 295, whose notions as to time are supported by Simeon of Durham, Walter de Hemingford, and others.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1065, which states that Harold, having subdued Wales, ordered a hunting-palace to be built there before Lammas, and "there gathered much good, and thought to have king Edward there for the purpose of hunting," which proves he was there himself. The language of Florence is more indefinite, yet appears to imply the presence of "the brave earl of Wessex."

[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1065.

[4] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1065. Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 426

[5] These occurrences were numerous. First, Harold is driven out to sea, wrecked, taken prisoner, and thrown chained into a dungeon. After some time he finds means of

due allowance for the variations already pointed out, runs as follows. "The earl of Kent and Wessex, engaged in protecting the marches from the inroads of the Kymri, in watching over his own interests, always more or less in jeopardy from the machinations of the earls of Mercia, and absorbed by profoundly disquieting thoughts, suggested by the relations which he could not but have known to exist between his brother Tostig and the turbulent and sanguinary people over whom Edward's partiality had placed him, goes forth like a knight-errant to deliver two hostages, his brother and nephew, from prison.

Before his departure he is warned by the king—who, it must be remembered, had basely betrayed those hostages into captivity—not to place himself in the power of William, with whose craft and selfishness he was but too well acquainted, otherwise he would only bring discredit on himself and grievous calamities on his country.[1] This earnest solicitude for his brother-in-law on the part of Edward implies no over-mastering aversion for the House of Godwin, or strong desire to pass the sceptre out of his own hands into those of the Norman duke,

despatching a secret message to William, in consequence of which much negociation takes place between him and Guy, and it is not until several couriers have passed to and fro that this brigand takes Harold to Eu. Many tournaments are then arranged in succesion, in the intervals between which Harold may be supposed to have been making love to one of William's daughters. Then follow three or four expeditions against Bretagne, in all of which Harold served under the duke. Can we imagine that less than eight or nine months would have been passed in all these wars and amusements. Compare Lappenberg, II. 268; Guillaume de Poitiers, in Guizot, t. XXIX. p. 369. Hardrada's Saga, cap. 78, appropriates little short of a year to Harold's adventure. Sailing towards Bretland (Wales), he is driven with all his ships to Rouen, where he remains during the whole summer, autumn, and winter, sitting up all night with the duchess, one of the most beautiful women that could be seen, and exciting William's jealousy. To allay this torturing feeling, he makes proposals for one of William's daughters, then very young, but without the least intention of wedding her, and when the spring returns sails back to England, leaving the jealous and vindictive Norman to brood over his plans of vengeance.

[1] Radulph de Diceto, p. 481; Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 196; Henry de Knyghton, p. 2337; Higden, Polychronicon III. 283.

from whose ambition, on the contrary, he anticipates nothing but evil and disaster to England. No considerations, however, deter the headstrong earl. With Edward's remonstrances still ringing in his ears, to sea he goes, and is immediately shipwrecked in the territories of Guy, count of Ponthieu, who puts him in fetters, and throws him into a dungeon. Here, instead of bethinking himself of his own sovereign, a few of whose ships of war, under the command of Tostig, Gurth, or Leofwine, would have speedily brought Guy to reason, he meanly appeals to the compassion of the duke of Normandy. Regarding him rather as prey than as a guest, William, like a true leader of banditti, perceives at once all the advantages to be derived from the possession of so noble a prisoner, and by menaces full of fury compels the brigand of Ponthieu to deliver him into his hands.

Once in the Norman capital, Harold comprehends all the perils of his position.[1] William glozes and flatters, deals largely in promises, still more largely in fictions, and the result is a compact the most absurd on record. To prove his right to the English crown, he is made to describe an agreement[2] entered into by him and Edward when they were youths together in Normandy. Edward, however, had ceased to be a youth when William was born, the birth of the former having taken place in A.D. 1003, and the latter, at the earliest, in A.D. 1024, or in A.D. 1027, if we adopt the common reckoning, which makes him eight years old when his father, Robert the Devil, quitted France, in A.D. 1035, to proceed on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. By this

[1] "Sensit Haraldus periculum undique nec intellexit qua parte evaderet." Walter Hemingford, II. 457.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 196. Hemingford, II., 457, observes: "Dicebat enim Regem Edwardum, quando cum eo tunc juvene et ipse juvenis in Normannia dimoraretur, sibi interposita fide sua pollicitum fuisse quod si Rex Angliæ foret unquam, jus Regni in illum jure Hæreditario post se transferret." Here it is obvious the respective ages of the two are entirely lost sight of.

computation William had barely attained the age of thirteen, when, at the invitation of Hardicanute, Edward left his place of exile to enjoy a superior style of dependence at the Court of Winchester. Accordingly the man of thirty-seven and the boy of thirteen could obviously never have been youths together, which sufficiently, I think, disposes of the duke's claim to the English crown through this secret treaty.

His negociations with Harold appear to be surrounded with equally strong objections;[1] several of the stipulations of their compact having been under the circumstances too monstrous to be credible. One of the witnesses, who for the occurrences he relates depends entirely on hearsay, tells us at one time that the eldest of William's daughters,[2] having fallen in love with the tall, handsome, eloquent, and fascinating English prince, was betrothed to him;[3] while at another time, he accuses that prince of falsehood, for affirming to Edward that such was the case. Harold's sister, it is well-known, was the queen of England, and was then living with her husband in his palace; yet William is made to ask her hand for one of his nobles, and Harold with equal facility is made to give it.[4] There is no difficulty in understanding how the chroniclers, writing at a distance, in time or place, should amuse themselves with such inventions, which no contemporary would have dared to utter. Having paved the way with these preliminary absurdities, the servile monks approach the object of all their fictions—the bestowal of the crown of England by the Confessor on the duke of Normandy, and the

[1] Compare Annales Burtonensis, I. 247. Henry de. Knyghton, p. 2337.

[2] Radulph de Diceto bestows on this lady the name of Ala, p. 481.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis, V. 11. Compare III. 11. William of Malmesbury, to show the little value we should set in this matter on his testimony, speaks of Agatha as at that time a child; II. 13; while Ordericus himself, not making the end of his commonwealth agree with the beginning, accuses Harold of falsehood, for stating to Edward what he himself affirms in the passage first referred to.

[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, *ubi supra*. Diceto, p. 481.

oath of Harold, taken for greater sanctity over a tub of dead men's bones,[1] to secure it to him. Being quite in the humour to be prodigal of oaths, there was no act of treachery or baseness which the man, who for his unflinching courage and invincible greatness of soul obtained from the spontaneous admiration of his contemporaries the surname of the "Dauntless," was not ready, through craven fear, to engage by oath to perform: he bound himself to deliver into William's hands the castle and well of Dover,[2] together with all the other fortresses in his earldom, to take the Bastard's daughter to wife, he being then a married man; to give his sister, the pious and fair Editha, noblest by far among the Saxon queens of England, to one of the duke's courtiers; in short to degenerate into a sort of Edric, the arch-traitor and plague spot of English history.

Such are the circumstances which have generally appeared sufficiently probable to obtain credence from historians, though from a careful and impartial examination of all the statements of the chroniclers, they seem to be destitute of all claim to belief. It would not, however, have been right to pass over the legend in silence; though, if the reasons I have adduced for discrediting it should be deemed satisfactory, future writers of English history, may, perhaps, content themselves with tacitly consigning it to oblivion. William of Poitiers, the only contemporary Chronicler who countenances the tale, is so partial, so extravagant, and so malevolent and vindictive whenever any member of the house of Godwin is concerned, that he appears occasionally to become frantic with hatred, so that unable to satiate his fury on the

[1] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1065.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1059, says Harold engaged by oath to deliver up to William the castle of Canterbury, together with the whole kingdom, on Edward's death in consequence of which he was betrothed to the duke's daughter, then a little girl, and enriched with all her inheritance. Roger of Wendover tells the same story, only substituting Dover for Canterbury; and adds that thenceforward Harold was regarded as a member of William's family

living, he betakes himself in imagination to the resting-place of the great earl, and insults him in his grave. A man of such a temper of mind could hardly be expected to be a calm and scrupulous narrator of facts; yet if we accept the calumnious fiction, the worthlessness of which I have endeavoured to prove, it is exclusively to his authority we must succumb, for the other relaters of the story are only so many echoes of his assertions. The inquiry is not, as some appear to imagine, a mere Saxon question—it is a question of fact. If the story be true, it proves Harold to have been weak enough to conceal his feelings to save his life, while it demonstrates William to have been a ruthless leader of banditti, ready, in order to gain his own ends, to imbrue his hands in the blood of his guest, who had frankly confided in his honour. Incredulity, therefore, it appears to me, makes still more for the reputation of William than for that of Harold—consequently the question is rather a Norman than a Saxon one.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAST OF THE SAXON KINGS.

THERE is no portion of English history so involved in obscurity or beset with difficulties as that on which we are now about to enter. Not a statement can be hazarded which has not been made the subject of controversy; not a position taken up which has not been repeatedly assailed and defended; not an event related which has not been distorted and discoloured by conflicting interpretations. Nevertheless, by a critical examination of the original authorities—by a diligent attention to chronology—by duly weighing each chronicler's motives, situation, means of acquiring knowledge, and claims to credibility, it may not be impossible, even at this distance of time, to ascertain the truth; and no matter whose character may suffer, this is the object of history. Names weighed down by the accumulated calumny of a thousand years, may thus be sometimes rescued from obloquy, and restored to the honourable position they should have held from the first.

Much more importance than they deserve has been attached to the wishes of Edward the Confessor, respecting the person who was to succeed him; for the crown being elective, the choice of the new sovereign devolved upon the nobles and clergy in Witenagemót assembled. Even such claims, however, as might have been founded on the will of the deceased monarch were wholly wanting to the duke of Normandy. There is not a tittle of evidence that Edward ever designated or contemplated

him as his heir. The fiction that he conveyed to William the expression of his intentions in his favour through Robert Champart, the simoniacal archbishop of Canterbury,[1] is entirely dissipated by the fact, that long after that prelate's death, he sent for his own nephew from Hungary with the publicly declared design of proposing him to the nation as its sovereign.[2] Besides, knowing that all the troubles of his own reign had sprung from his partiality for the Normans, who were held in abhorrence throughout England, he would not, even had he cherished such a project, have dared to utter it, especially to the recognised leader of the anti-Norman party, whom for many years the respect and affection of the whole country had marked out for his successor.

No contemporary authority[3] of the slightest credit adopts the Norman view of the transaction. On the contrary, every English Chronicler who lived at the time, and may be supposed to have enjoyed opportunities of obtaining accurate information, affirms that the Confessor bequeathed the crown to Harold. A testimony still more decisive, however, even than that of the indigenous historians is that of William himself, who, on his death-bed, his conscience burdened with every species of crime and villainy, confessed he had not obtained the crown of England by any right of succession, but wrested it from Harold by the sword on the heath of Senlac. The persevering falsehood of a whole life being thus

[1] This priest died in A.D. 1053, and therefore could hardly be expected to wring anything from the Confessor on his death-bed thirteen years after. See note to Ordericus Vitalis, I. 459.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1057. William of Malmesbury, II. 13.

[3] Compare Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066. Lives of Edward the Confessor, p. 433; Historia Eliensis, III. 515, where Harold is said to have been previously called subregulus. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066. Simeon of Durham states emphatically that Edward bequeathed the crown to Harold, who was likewise elected by all the nobles of England, p. 193. Radulph de Diceto repeats and confirms the testimony of Simeon, p. 479. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 284, observes, "Tradit marianus, quod rex Edwardus ante obitum suum designaverit Haraldum regem futurum."

relinquished at its close that he might not enter the presence of God with a lie upon his lips, he dared not, in that terrible moment, assume the right to bequeath to another a sceptre which no one had bequeathed to him. He left the matter, therefore, to the disposal of heaven, thus abandoning the fiction of which he had skilfully availed himself during twenty-one years, that he had possessed the throne of England as Edward's heir.[1]

That in all princely qualities Harold greatly surpassed his Norman rival is not to be doubted. He was generous, humane, and brave, even to a fault; his piety and munificence to the Church are warmly extolled by the monastic writers; and his clemency, love of justice, eloquence, and majestic presence, are acknowledged even by his worst enemies. Had the influence of his character been less powerful, the dangerous circumstances of the times might have suggested a different choice; but all the magnates of the realm having been drawn to London by the Christmas festivities, met immediately

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 15. The admissions put into the mouth of William by the ecclesiastical historian of Normandy, if not made exactly in the words in which they have come down to us, were doubtless believed at the time to have been extorted from the Conqueror by remorse. Ordericus hated Harold, and was generally ready to pour forth adulation at the feet of the Norman prince; but he also, as well as his hero, felt himself to be in the grasp of Nemesis, who wrung from him the truth piecemeal. What he has related was probably confided to him by William's confessor, who may have believed that by divulging the terrible secret he was doing God service: "I tremble," gasped the conqueror, "when I reflect that I am stained by the rivers of blood I have shed." ..... "I have placed on my brow a royal diadem"... "by victories over numerous adversaries."..."But much as human ambition is disposed to triumph in such successes, I am a prey to cruel fears and anxieties when I reflect with what barbarities they were attended." ..... "I did not attain the crown of England by hereditary right"..... "it was by the slaughter and banishment of Harold's adherents that I subjugated England to rule. I have persecuted its native inhabitants beyond all reason—whether nobles or commons I have cruelly oppressed them." ..... "I took revenge on multitudes of both sexes by subjecting them to the calamity of a cruel famine, and by so doing, alas, me! became the barbarous murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of that fine race of people." Even if this lugubrious confession issued only from the lips of William's cloistered panegyrist, it came evidently from the heart, and may be accepted as the universal conviction of the eleventh century.

after Edward's funeral, and with few dissentient voices elected Harold to be king of England. Some, it is said there were, who, through attachment to the ancient House of Cerdic, would, in more tranquil times, have stood up for the pretensions of the Etheling Edgar; but his youth and mental imbecility disqualifying him for acceding to a throne surrounded with peril, he was set aside in favour of that great Englishman, the fame of whose achievements already filled Christendom.

Harold's coronation[1] took place at Westminster on the sixth of January, A.D. 1066, and the ceremony of consecration was performed by Aldred,[2] archbishop of York, the primate Stigand[3] having been suspended on the futile charge of schism, by the profligate and venal court of Rome. Possessing the title of king—the power he had long wielded—Harold at once applied himself to the abrogation of bad laws, and the enactment of good ones. As if he foresaw the shortness of the career allotted to him, he appeared resolved to make up for the fewness of his days by the vigour and magnitude of his deeds. His administration of justice deserves to be regarded as a model by all succeeding princes: towards evil-doers he was inexorable, while honest and good men found in him a kind and noble benefactor. To the clergy of every grade he behaved with the

[1] Simeon. of Durham, p. 193. Diceto, p. 479. Rudborne, I. 240, relates, perhaps figuratively, that he put the diadem of England on his own head.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 284.

[3] Stephen Birchington, who may be reckoned among Stigand's libellers, says, "Hic in habitu clericali primus archiepiscopatu functus est." Vitæ Archiepiscoporum Cantuariensium, I. 5. He then informs us that Stigand was William's, meaning Harold's, chaplain. Diceto (Anglia Sacra, II. 684), with the fierce prejudice of a monk, assails the memory of Stigand because he accepted the archbishopric while Robert was still living, and also presumed to wear the pall which the simoniacal foreigner had left behind him at Canterbury. He then makes use of a phrase which has coloured the language of a modern historian. Benedict X. sent him, he says, the pall for money "vel quod mali gratificantur similibus;" an idea which Lingard adopts, observing of Benedict and Stigand, "it was no difficult matter for one intruder to obtain the pallium from another." History of England, I. 286.

utmost liberality and courtesy, so that bishops, abbots, monks, and clerks rejoiced at his accession, and prayed for the protraction of his reign.[1]

With the assistance of men, influential through their sanctity, he laboured to restrain that corruption of manners which the long continuance of peace, the increase of wealth, and more frequent intercourse with the Continent had introduced. But we must not be betrayed by monastic declamation into an exaggerated estimate of Anglo-Saxon degeneracy. Good but mistaken men like Wulstan, bishop of Worcester, converted harmless fashions or follies into crimes, inveighing, for example, against the wearing of long hair, as if courage and muscular energy were inconsistent with flowing locks. The austerity of this excellent prelate, in which he anticipated the Puritans of a later age, often laid him open to the ridicule even of churchmen. Making distinctions where nature has made none, he condemned the use of the sable and the ermine, while, through a quaint partiality for the name, he consented to line his robes with lambskin.[2] There was moreover something ludicrous in his hostility to the luxuriant curls of his countrymen: he carried about a little knife,[3] with which he was accustomed to pare his nails, or scrape off blots from his books, and when by his eloquence he had convinced any one of the sin of going unshorn, he drew forth this little instrument, and hacked off a lock to what he deemed the proper length, counselling his obedient penitent to cut off the remainder to suit.

Soon after the inauguration of the new dynasty, intelligence was brought to the capital that symptoms of disaffection had made their appearance in Northum-

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066, Historia Eliensis, III. 515. The Chronicle of Ramsey, which takes the opposite view, destroys its own authority by falling into the most palpable errors, making Tostig Harold's elder brother, that is confounding him with Sweyn, and prosing about ridiculous visions. Hist. Rames., III. 462.

[2] Anglia Sacra, II. 259.

[3] Willelmus Malmesberiensis De Vita S. Wulstani, II. 254.

bria, whose inhabitants affected to be indignant at the idea of subordination to the southern counties.[1] To preserve them in their allegiance, Harold made a progress northwards, not followed by an army, but in company with the bishop of Worcester, whose patriotism and piety were universally known and respected. By kindness and gentleness, which were among Harold's principal characteristics, he secured the affections of the Anglo-Danes, and then returned to celebrate the Easter festival at Westminster.

Many causes now concurred to disturb the minds of men. Rumours constantly reached the country of designs of great magnitude which were forming against it in the neighbouring states, Flanders, Normandy, Scotland, and Norway. Tostig and the Norman duke had married sisters[2]—the former, Judith; the latter, Matilda—daughters of count Baldwin. In the breast of the exiled earl, resentment for his expulsion from Northumbria, which he attributed to the influence of his brother Harold, predominated over all other feelings, and led him to co-operate with William in his designs against England. No chronicler has revealed to us the nature of their scheme, or of the policy by which it was to be realised. From events alone, therefore, can we conjecture either. It appears to have been settled between the two pretenders that Tostig, whose Flemish armament was first in readiness, should appear suddenly in the Channel, strike terror into the southern counties, and then, to perplex the councils of the English king, effect a descent upon Northumbria, which William at the outset, in the dubiousness of his affairs, was no doubt ready to concede to him.

[1] "Soli Northamhumbri magnum et gentile tumentes interim parere distulere; Aquilonalem cervicositatem Australi ut dictitabant mollitiei subjugare non dignati." Will. Malmes. De Vita S. Wulstani, II. 253.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 343. Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11. This writer, though not ill informed respecting the affairs of Normandy, often displays gross ignorance of English transactions. Thus he speaks of Tostig as Harold's elder brother, and supposes him to have been earl of Wessex.

Basing his claims to the English crown on the fiction that it had been bequeathed to him by Edward, the duke despatched messages to London to assert what he was pleased to call his rights. To give some colour to this proceeding, he won over by presents and promises the reigning pope, Alexander[1] the Second, to his interest, and this, through the ignorance and superstition of the times, was a consideration of great moment. By the advice, probably, of the English prelates, who looked with an eye of apprehension at Rome, where, in their turn, they were regarded with aversion, Harold neglected or scorned to court the interference of a foreign bishop with the internal affairs of his kingdom. The establishment of a dynasty as well as the choice of an individual sovereign rested with the nobles, clergy, and people of England; these three orders had substituted the dynasty of Godwin for that of Cerdic, had placed the diadem of England upon Harold's brow, had intrusted to him the safeguard of their liberty and independence, and in defence of this cause he resolved to live or die

It has been seen, however, that the Confessor had introduced numerous foreign ecclesiastics into England, and these, scattered at intervals over the whole face of the country, constituted so many secret points of support for William. They were necessarily made acquainted with the designs of the duke, and must often have met his envoys and messengers as they came and went between the court of Westminster and that of Rouen. Stimulated at once, therefore, by papal and Norman influence and predilections, we may safely conclude that they strained their power to the utmost to promote the cause they had at heart. To effect this purpose, they thickened the gloom emanating from the

[1] John Capgrave, in his Chronicle of England, imparts a strong Norman colour to his narrative. Having related the fiction about Harold's oath, he proceeds. "Then went duke William to Alisaunder the Pope, and expressed onto him the rite which he had to the crowne of Yngland, and the Pope comaunded him on his blessing that he schuld porsewe his rite," p. 129.

dens of superstition which they saw gathering over the land. By their means sinister rumours were spread and multiplied, so that, in spite of the national affection for the Godwin dynasty, instead of that cheerful hope which generally ushers in a new reign, a sort of tragic grandeur invested the actions and movements of the king. Nature herself soon imparted additional force to the machinations of the papal party. A comet[1] of extraordinary brilliance appeared suddenly in the heavens, shook its flaming hair over the earth during seven nights, perplexing with fear of change, not monarchs only, but a majority of human kind, and then retreated into the infinite depths of space. This harbinger of disaster and calamity, according to popular interpretation, was visible throughout Europe and Asia, and in the ignorance of astronomy which then prevailed, excited a degree of terror no longer intelligible to educated minds. The fears of that generation have been embodied in a few words by a monk of Malmesbury, who, in an address to the comet, exclaims: "Thou art come at length, thou art come, to be wept by many mothers. Long is it since I beheld thee, but thy present appearance is doubly terrible, because thou foreshowest the ruin of my country."[2]

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066, Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11, says it was visible during fifteen days. Guy of Amiens, De Bello Hastingensi, V. 125. Speaking of this comet, Geoffrey Gaimar says it lighted up the sky so brilliantly, that the night seemed turned into day, V. 5150. Simeon of Durham, p. 194, relates that it was visible throughout the world. Chronicle of Abingdon, I. 483.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 284. Thierry, History of the Norman Conquest, p. 59 (Eng. trans.) refers to Higden, but erroneously calls Oliver, author of the Address to the Comet, a monk of Glastonbury. Higden tells a ludicrous story of this monk, who having read in the mythology the fable of Dædalus, thought he would fly like him. He therefore fastened feathers to his feet and hands, and ascending the top of a high tower, threw himself off. For a good furlong he was supported by his wings, but being seized by a sudden gust of wind, was dashed to the ground, and broke his legs. After this accident he seems to have relinquished the art of flying, and to have betaken himself to astronomy, which he studied with considerably more success.

In furtherance of the plan agreed upon by the duke of Normandy, Tostig left Flanders with his fleet, and making a descent upon the Isle of Wight,[1] collected plunder after the manner of the old Vikings. Then returning eastwards, he landed at Sandwich,[2] where his ships being short of hands he impressed a number of seamen into his service, and then hearing of the approach of Harold's fleet and army, hastened away to the North, intending to raise the standard of revolt in his ancient earldom. Landing however in Lindsey,[3] where he commenced the work of pillage and devastation, he was attacked and expelled by the earls Edwin and Morcar. Many of his seamen, as might have been expected, forsook him here; he lost thirty-eight of his ships, and with the twelve that remained to him, took refuge with king Malcolm, in Scotland, to await the coming of the Norwegian king.[4]

Meanwhile, Harold having equipped a formidable fleet, despatched it to cruise in the Channel. He likewise organised a more numerous and powerful army than had ever before been seen in England, and stationed it at various points along the coast.[5] William, at the same time, was engaged in his preparations for invading England. It is matter of wonder that he should have thought it necessary to put forward any pretence of right for the undertaking, since the Normans were accustomed to look upon everything as their property of which they could render themselves masters by the sword. They had for nearly three hundred years been engaged in attempts to subjugate the Anglo-Saxons, and the duke of Normandy belonged by blood and habits to the race which had produced Regnar, Lodbrog, Hingwar and Hubba, Halfdene, Hastings, and Rollo. It was putting, therefore, a severe restraint on his viking propensities to defer so far to public

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066.
[2] Simeon of Durham, p. 194.
[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066.
[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066.
[5] Simeon of Durham, p. 194. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066.

opinion, already beginning to sap the foundations of barbarism throughout Europe, as to forge a will, though he never ventured to produce it, and, under colour of this fabrication, to aim at a crown which his bolder and more unscrupulous ancestors would have seized without any pretext. Adapting, however, his craft and his enterprises to the altered spirit of the times, he cloaked his violence with imposture, and readily, as I have said, obtained the co-operation of the sovereign pontiff.

The genius and virtue of Junius Brutus, of Fabius, Camillus, Cincinnatus, Scipio, and the Gracchi had created the power which, metamorphosed into superstition, and wielded by a priest, still governed the world. The shadow of Rome hung thick over every soul in Normandy, whose duke, in his expedition against England, became the leader of the first crusade. To take up arms against an excommunicated king and people was, in the opinion of an ignorant age, to engage in the service of God. Sacerdotal influence blended, therefore, with secular, to rouse the zeal and stimulate the passions of northern Christendom, to undertake the conquest of the great heretical island which, blasted by papal thunders, and devoted to perdition, was now, like an immense storehouse of plunder, thrown open to all the adventurers and miscreants of Europe.

The duke, whom the indiscriminate lust and profligacy of his predecessors had connected with nearly all the leading families of Normandy, called together his relatives and adherents, prelates and barons,[1] abbots and feudal chiefs, and by motives and arguments addressed skilfully to their licentiousness, their avarice, or their ambition, prevailed on them to enter into his views.[2] This public meeting,

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11. Wace, in his Roman de Rou, has undertaken a narrative of these transactions, but, unless where supported by other authorities, is obviously not to be relied on.

[2] The author of the Brevis Relatio represents the Norman barons as instigating William to undertake the conquest, p. 5.

however, was merely a politic form. The real business had been accomplished before by private interviews and modes of reasoning which it would not have been convenient to employ in the face of the world. Some were won over by promises of vast estates, towns, and castles; others by archbishoprics and bishoprics; others by offices of high dignity in the state, titles of honour, and boundless opulence; while others had their imaginations inflamed by the prospect of plunder, by the sack of monasteries and convents, and the fleeting or permanant possession of noble ladies, renowned as English women have always been for the rare splendour of their beauty. To gratify his ruthless partisans, the duke was willing to promise anything. His own wife had a private revenge to gratify. William had not enjoyed her first affections, which, at her father, Baldwin's court, had been lavished on a noble Englishman, who visited Flanders as Edward's ambassador. By this earl, however, her charms were despised, or at least neglected; the offence rankled in her heart, and she longed eagerly for the opportunity of slaking the thirst of vengeance.[1]

William scattered proclamations through all the neighbouring countries, skilfully enumerating the inducements to join his standard; and as Europe, in that turbulent and barbarous age, abounded everywhere with savage and lawless spirits, Normandy immediately became the Kebleh towards which they turned their faces. Every road leading thitherward from Flanders, from the upper and lower Rhine, from Burgundy,[2] from Acquitainè, from France, Anjou, Maine Poitou, and Bretagne, became alive with infantry and men at arms, swarthy, fierce, sensual, eager to shed blood, or animated

[1] See the authorities collected by Sir Henry Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, II. 55. As the earliest writer who refers to this story is the continuator of Wace, it can only be regarded as a tradition. Indirectly, however, the account is supported by Domesday itself, which speaks of Brihtric's lands as passing into the hands of queen Matilda, or to those of Robert Fitz Haimon.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11.

by those still worse passions which gloomy bigotry inspires. Norman mothers, familiar with the lives led by their sons, urged them to enlist under the duke's banner, and expiate by the slaughter of the excommunicated English their own crimes and offences.

The subordinate chiefs throughout the country applied themselves diligently to the preparation of their contingents, ships, horses, soldiers, money. How William himself obtained the necessary funds has never been clearly explained. The raising of loans was an expedient not altogether unknown in those ages, though the machinery employed in the operation differed from that now in use. Sovereigns applied to their vassals, to the clergy, to neighbouring princes, or to the pope; and when there appeared a reasonable chance of obtaining good interest, the papal court was seldom unwilling to speculate. In the present case Alexander bestowed on the Norman duke a prolific source of aid and opulence—the Standard, as it was called, of St. Peter,[1] which, wherever it was displayed, sufficed to attract towards it both men and money. By this peculiar financial agency, the Norman duke soon obtained the means of constructing a formidable fleet and filling it with stores and arms. He was enabled likewise to draw to his standard sixty thousand men, whom he quartered and supplied with provisions in the districts bordering on the intended ports of embarcation.

Meanwhile the necessity of hastening the expedition was every day making itself more sensibly felt; the summer was wearing away; and the season approaching in which, to the barks of those ages, the storms of the British Channel became formidable. Still, the longer the delay, the more swelled the ranks of the invading army, whose numbers at length pressed almost beyond endurance upon the resources of Normandy. The equinoxial gales were blowing, and William's thoughts

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11.

became as perturbed as the ocean, whose tumultuous and roaring waves he beheld stretching out interminably before him. Incidents, moreover, of sinister augury had occurred to augment the gloom and perturbation of his mind; in the short passage from the mouth of the Dive to St. Valeri,[1] several ships had been wrecked and their crews drowned. To prevent the spread of a panic through the whole fleet and army, the bodies cast ashore by the waves were buried secretly at night, while every practicable precaution was taken to involve the dismal proceeding in mystery.

Many causes concurred to delay the departure of the expedition. Unfavourable winds were alone the ostensible pretext; but, in reality, the duke's movements were regulated by considerations no way connected with the weather. The English fleet, filled with seamen accustomed to buffet with tempests and to achieve victory on the waves, still cruised off the coast of Kent,[2] Sussex, Dorset, and Hampshire, while a series of English camps kindled their fires along the cliffs.[3] Above all, Harold of England was there, strong in his genius and his bravery—stronger still in the affections of the nation which rallied round him as its last hope. To measure lances with such a force, headed by such a general, was what William dared not attempt. He trusted to his deep-laid schemes of policy to disperse and dissipate the strength of England, before he ventured to array that of the Continent against it. He awaited, therefore, with torturing anxiety the arrival of messengers to announce the descent of Tostig with his Baltic rovers on the Northumbrian coast, which must inevitably distract the counsels, and would probably divide the strength of the English king.

[1] De Bello Hastingensi Carmen, V. 46. Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 391. William of Malmesbury, III.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066. Henry of Huntingdon, p. 762.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066. Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11. Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 389, relates in his usual style of exaggeration that Harold "couvrit le rivage de lances et d'une innombrable armée."

The policy of the statesman, however, was closely allied in William's mind with the superstition of the devotee. He was constant, therefore, in his devotion to St. Valeri, before whose shrine he daily spent several hours in the supplications of pious ambition. The feelings which pervaded the armament, as well as the multitudes who were to remain behind, became every hour more perturbed.[1] The people to be attacked were unknown and much dreaded. The old Scandinavian passion for the sea had now been replaced by the strongest fear of it, and therefore both the soldiers and their friends shed abundance of tears, at the prospect of a parting which for all might and for some must be eternal. Danger begets piety, and therefore men whose noblest aspirations were for plunder, poured forth innumerable prayers to heaven for the success of their enterprise. The priests organised a procession and marched along the beach, bearing aloft the relics of St. Valeri,[2] and uttering many vows and supplications, while their minds fluctuated between hope and fear.

The duke of Normandy's policy soon began to produce its natural fruits. His brother-in-law, Tostig, having failed to procure allies in Denmark, had, as I have said, been more successful in Norway, where sympathy with the pirates of Neustria survived in greater vigour. The once proud and formidable son of Godwin had now degenerated into an adventurer, desperate and unscrupulous, playing in reality, though not perhaps in intention, the game of the Norman ruler,[3] and animated by a fratricidal hatred of his dauntless brother. We need to be informed by no chronicler of the thoughts

[1] Higden relates that the common people murmured, and called William a madman for attempting to usurp the throne of another. Polychronicon, III. 285–287.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 392. Henry de Knyghton (p. 2340) describes as follows this display of superstition: "Tunc dux Willielmus fecit statim corpus Wallerici foras efferri, et pro vento habendo sub dio poni."

[3] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11, observes that after the conference between the two brothers-in-law, "Tostig received the Duke's permission to return to England, having *firmly engaged to assist him*, both in his own person and with all his friends."

and schemes which filled the minds of the allies. Whatever pretexts may have floated on the surface, William, Tostig, and Hardrada had secretly but one aim—that of acquiring the crown of England for himself. The plan agreed upon appears to have been this—to divide England into three parts,[1] as it had often been divided before, and apportion one of these sections to each of the invaders. William would at the outset have been content with the sceptre of Wessex, while East Anglia and Northumbria would have satisfied the aspirations of Tostig and the Norwegian king. That nothing less than conquest and settlement were aimed at, is evident from the fact that Hardrada consented to congregate the whole force, and exhaust the resources of his country[2] in fitting out the invading fleet, on board of which, when it was completed, he put his queen, Ellisof, his son, Olaf, and his two daughters, Maria and Ingigerd.[3] Then sailing westward, Hardrada was joined on the Scottish coast by Tostig's ships, together with those of the earls of Orkney, Paul, and Erling, after which they made in all speed for the mouth of the Humber.

Tostig experienced the strongest desire to become master of York, either because it had been his capital in happier days, or in order that he might exterminate those who had driven him from the kingdom. He, therefore, ascended the Ouse, and disembarked his forces at Richale,[4] on its right bank, where the gallant brothers, Edwin and Morcar, at the head of the men of Northumbria, hastened to encounter the invaders.[5]

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, in the book and chapter quoted above, represents Tostig as prevailing upon Harold Hadrada (whom he calls Harfager) to engage in the expedition against England by promising him half the kingdom.

[2] In his Saga he is said to have sent out a message-token, and ordered out half the men who were able to carry arms; after which, having equipped a fleet of nearly two hundred sail, he proceeded before his departure from Norway to "king Olaf's shrine, unlocked it, clipped his hair and nails, and locked the shrine again, and threw the keys into the Nid." Heimskringla, III. 81.

[3] Heimskringla, III. 83.

[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 194.

[5] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066.

Hardrada was a veteran warrior, who, with a small army of Northmen, had traversed the whole continent of Europe, diffusing terror wherever he marched, and taken service among the fierce mercenaries who guarded the throne of the effeminate Emperor of the East.[1] At Constantinople he stood in turn with his battle-axe on his shoulder at the door of the imperial palace. Growing weary, however of this inactive and monotonous life, he quitted the shores of the Bosphorus, and for some time led the life of a pirate in the Mediterranean. Landing in search of plunder at the Piræeus, he carved his name in Runic characters on one of the famous Lions, which after various vicissitudes were carried as symbols of victory to Venice. This inscription has now, by the aid of photography, been deciphered by a Danish scholar.[2] Among other achievements Hardrada had desolated and pillaged Africa and Sicily,[3] and with the riches thus amassed returned at length to Norway, through Russia, where at Novogorod he married Ellisof, daughter of the Czar Jarislief, to whom he had forwarded a large portion of the plunder which, at the head of the Varangians, he had accumulated in his expeditions. For such a man tranquillity had no charms. His colossal figure, seven feet high, had been beheld on many a Baltic battle-field, and now stalked along the banks of the Humber and Ouse in search of something nobler than the plunder of the Levant.

[1] Hardrada, after having been several years in the service of the Russian Czar, appears to have passed down the Don or Dnieper into the Black Sea, for by one of the scalds his approach to the Greek capital is thus described:

"Before the cold sea-curling blast,
The cutter from the land flew past,
Her black yards swinging to and fro,
Her shield-hung gunwale dipping low.
The king saw glancing o'er the bow,
Constantinople's metal glow,
From tower and roof and painted sails
Gliding past towns and wooded vales."

Heimskringla, Laing's translation, III. 3.

[2] Professor Rafn.

[3] "The best proof that this body-guard (the Varangian) was composed chiefly of Northmen is, that almost every year coins of the Greek emperors, Cufic coins, gold chains, and other ornaments, apparently of eastern workmanship, are found in Norway about the houses of bonders, being probably the hidden treasures of their forefathers, brought with them from their service in Constantinople." Laing, III. 4.

Against the forces of this regal adventurer, and his equally terrible ally, Tostig, Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, advanced at the head of their people and encountered them on Wednesday, September 20th,[1] at Fulford-gate. The combatants were in every respect unequal. At the head of an army so large as to require to be transported in a fleet of nearly five hundred ships, were two veteran generals, inured to war from the cradle, while the English commanders were almost entirely destitute of experience. Nevertheless, rushing impetuously upon the invaders, they at first carried everything before them. But tactics and discipline often prove more than a match for the most exalted valour. Hardrada put in practice all the martial arts he had learned in the East; the English were repulsed and defeated,[2] and their dead bodies strewed the plain, and choked the channel of the river.[3]

The whole of Northumbria now lay open to the invaders, though the sentiments of the people, and more especially of the clergy, who united with their archbishop in attachment to Harold, were rendered still more hostile by the sanguinary discomfiture at Fulford. The Northmen now entered York,[4] where they received and gave in exchange a hundred and fifty hostages, and then marching inland, took up a strong position at Stamford, on the Derwent.

By the success of these operations, Harold of England was placed in a situation of almost inextricable difficulty.[5] On one side was the duke of Normandy meditating invasion; on the other, the king of Norway, who, with an immense army now flushed with victory, was already in the country, and actually marching upon the South.[6] William, in spite of his preparations, had

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066.
[2] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2339.
[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066.
[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 194.
[5] Odericus Vitalis, III. 14.
[6] Matthew of Westminster, Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066.

so long deferred the threatened blow, that it seemed not improbable he might put off his invasion till the spring. The Channel was ploughed up by storms, which appeared to anticipate the coming winter. To the Normans, the sea, as I have said, was an object of terror, and the prevalence of contrary winds might consequently suffice to check their attempt. A few days he hoped would enable him to rout the Norwegians with their Scotch and Irish auxiliaries, and return victorious to preserve the inviolability of the southern shore. In conformity with these views, the fleet was withdrawn from the Channel, and precipitated northwards,[1] while the army broke up its camps, and in seven[2] divisions marched towards the Derwent.[3]

This proceeding, whether the result of misfortune or impolicy, may be regarded as the most calamitous recorded in the history of England, big as it was with defeat, disgrace, and innumerable evils. A great nation's destiny was then trembling in the balance. Frankness, honour, magnanimity, with every noble and chivalrous sentiment on the one side; craft, fraud, imposture, grasping avarice, and the most sanguinary cruelty on the other. Long and weary centuries of oppression, thraldom, insult, the domination of race by race, the substitution of despotic will for equitable laws, the wholesale transferance of property from the native to the stranger, the brand of infamy stamped upon the noblest families by the dishonour of wives and daughters, the pollution of convents and monasteries, the desolation of the English Church, whose most revered traditions and holiest rights were systematically trampled upon: all these things rendered inevitable by that fatal march were imperatively needed to obliterate its consequences.

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 14.

[2] Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei, V. 4223.

[3] Compare Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 204. Radulph de Diceto, p. 479. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 194. Saxon Chronicle and Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066.

Blind, however, to this long chain of disasters, the flower of the English army, with their dauntless king at their head, poured impetuously northwards to annihilate the invaders of their country. On the morning of the 25th of September, just as the sun was beginning to light up the extended heaths and brown woods of Yorkshire, the English came in sight of the Norwegian army drawn out in formidable array on the farther bank of the Derwent. Love for his misguided brother induced the English king to try the effect of negociation. Despatching to Tostig ambassadors, among whom it is said he himself proceeded in disguise, he offered him, as from brother to brother, not only reconciliation and peace, but the restoration of all his possessions and honours if he would lay down the sword. Tostig replied that this step should have been taken during the preceding winter, when he was wandering a fugitive and an exile over the Continent. If he should now, however, accept the terms proposed by his brother, what was to be conceded to his Scandinavian ally? "Seven feet of English ground," replied Harold, "or perhaps a little more as he is a very tall man."[1]

Upon this, the haughty and indignant earl put an end to all parley and prepared for battle. Banishment, the loss of his country, estrangement from his family, toil, watching, danger, had thrown him into a state of unnatural exaltation, which nothing but the fierce excitement of conflict could allay.

History enters with extreme reluctance upon the

[1] Heimskringla, III. 89. The author of the Saga attributes to Hardrada a sentiment so base and dastardly that it would have sufficed to exclude him from the ranks of manly warriors. Reproaching Tostig for neglecting to inform him that his brother Harold was among the ambassadors, he intimates distinctly that he would have fallen upon and murdered him had he known. "That was by far too long concealed from me," he said, "for they had come so near to our army that this Harold should never have carried back the tidings of our men's slaughter." Could we accept the testimony of this Icelandic scald for history, we should experience very little regret for the fate which, in a few hours, overtook this bloodthirsty Norwegian.

details of that fatal battle, the first act of the drama which was to close at Hastings. The Scandinavians were drawn out upon the plain in a vast half-moon,[1] with a scanty array of cavalry at either horn. Hardrada, with his blue tunic and glittering helm, mounted on a black horse, and preceded by his standard, called "The Devastator of the Earth," commanded one of the wings, while Tostig headed the other. The king of England, superior in cavalry, swept along the plain towards the foe,[2] and the shock of battle began at break of day. Never, perhaps, had a September sun looked upon a more terrible conflict—brother against brother, with all the hopes of England in the balance.

The Scandinavians on that day maintained their long established reputation for valour.[3] With their pikes stuck in the earth, they withstood the shock of the English cavalry, while their archers poured upon the assailants an incessant shower of arrows. As the English gained ground, the Norwegians retreated inch by inch with their faces to the foe, their armour bloody, their steps impeded by the corpses of their friends.[4] At length the retreat became a rout, the invaders were driven headlong over Stamford Bridge, narrow and built of wood. Here, a gigantic Norwegian made a stand, hewing down

[1] The Saga says in a circle, but this is evidently absurd.

[2] Though probably not ill-informed respecting the general scheme of this battle, the author of Hardrada's Saga, falls occasionally into palpable errors, as when he calls the king of England a "little man" (III. 90), since Harold Godwinson is known to have been a man of lofty stature.

[3] Arnor, the earl's scald, thus describes the appearance and behaviour of Hardrada in this battle: "Where the battle storm was ringing,
Where arrow-cloud was singing,
Harold stood there,
Of armour bare,
His deadly sword still swinging;
The foemen feel its bite,
His Norsemen rush to fight,
Danger to share,
With Harold there,
Where steel on steel was ringing."
Heimskringla, III. 91.

[4] Bromton, who has collected several traditions of this battle not commonly mentioned, observes, that the English army, "Norwagensis cedere sed non fugere compellabat. Ultra flumen igitur repulsi, vivis super mortuos transeuntibus magnanimiter restiterunt." Chronicon, p. 959, see also Henry de Knyghton, p. 2339.

the assailants with his battle-axe till he fell, pierced, it is said, with a spear by a man in a boat under the bridge.[1] In this battle Tostig and Hardrada perished, with nearly the whole of their army.[2] The plain, far and near, was strewed with dead, the gullies were red with blood, the river was choked, and it was not so much defeat that fell upon the Scandinavians as annihilation. An insignificant remnant of the vast armament which had sought the shores of England in five hundred ships fled away across the ocean in twenty, to awaken the cries of sorrow and desolation in all the fiords and gloomy forests of Norway.

The hurry and tumult of war prevented the English from performing the last sad offices for the dead, whose unburied remains lay heaped up and weltering in blood upon the heath, and for ages the site of this fearful battle was too certainly indicated by ghastly heaps of human bones, which far and near whitened the plain.[3] Saxon and Norwegian, invaded and invader, lying quietly side by side in death.

Harold, king of England, thus remained victorious.[4] But his victory was his ruin. Profound policy might have converted both Tostig and Hardrada into friends, and incorporated their great host with his own to be marshalled on the coast of Sussex against the Gallo-Normans.[5] He now, with thinned ranks, and mind

[1] Matthew, of Westminster, A.D. 1066, alters the tradition, and stations the gigantic Norwegian in the city gate, though he afterwards makes him drop into the river. Compare Bromton and Knyghton, *ubi supra.*

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 194. Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 405. Radulph de Diceto, p. 479. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 284.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 14. According to Henry de Knyghton, p. 2339, the name of Pons Belli, or Battle Bridge, was in his time bestowed on Stamford in memory of this great slaughter.

[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 194.

[5] Some of the Chroniclers, unable otherwise to account for the smallness of the king's forces, imagine that he offended the nation by omitting to distribute the plunder. But this omission could only have affected the survivors of Stamford Bridge, whom it might have induced to desert his standard. But from all that appears no men were

oppressed by the recollection of the fratricidal conflict into which he had been plunged by events, marched hastily towards London to prepare to meet a second and more formidable invasion. For while he was absent in the North, the duke of Normandy had assembled all his fleet at St. Valeri, and embarking his immense army, from the Ticino, and the Rhine, the Rhone, the Garonne, the Loire, the Scheldt, and the Seine, hoisted the standard of St. Peter, and, committing himself and his fortunes to the waves of the English Channel,[1] put off from the shore amid the braying of clarions, and the shouts of sixty thousand combatants.

The arrangements which William had made, and the precautions he had taken, betoken a mind fully alive to all the circumstances of his great enterprise. During the whole of the 28th of September, the army was engaged in embarking its horses, its stores, and arms; after which, late in the afternoon, the soldiers themselves went on board, and the fleet, consisting of four hundred ships of war, and more than a thousand transports, quitted the shores of France. As long as the day lasted, William's galley, bearing the Pope's standard aloft, with sails of different colours inwrought with lions, the symbols of Normandy, led the van. Upon its prow was the golden figure of a boy, holding with his left hand an ivory trumpet to his mouth, and with the finger of his right hand pointing across the waves towards England.[2] As evening came on the lamps, suspended in lanthorns from the mast-head, were kindled, to enable the mariners to avoid collision, and to keep up their courage during the night. William's own ship,

so staunch in his cause, so that the story must be regarded as one of those calumnious fables which were invented against the House of Godwin in Norman times. Higden, III. 285-286.

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 14. Guillaume de Poiters, t. XXIX. p. 392.

[2] Scriptores Rerum Gestarum Willelm. Conquest. p. 22. But when the vessel shifted its position, the figure-head would, of course, point the contrary way.

which had been presented to him by his wife,[1] being a quick sailer, shot a-head of the fleet, and when day dawned found itself alone upon the waves. Not knowing what had become of his companions, he ordered a sailor to ascend the rigging, to observe whether any portion of the fleet were visible; and the man reported that he could discern nothing but sea and sky.[2] Noticing some tokens of discouragement among his officers, which inwardly he himself more than shared, the duke caused a sumptuous breakfast to be laid out, and lavishly circulated richly-spiced wine to raise their drooping spirits.

Thus refreshed, William ordered the seaman aloft once more, when four ships were descried in the offing; and on a third ascent the mariner exclaimed that he beheld a forest of masts approaching.

Fortune often appears to remove all obstacles from the paths of some men, while she throws up every species of impediment in the way of others. At this critical moment the English fleet, partly despatched on different services, and partly run into harbour to re-victual,[3] had left the whole Channel open to the enemy. William, therefore, encountered no obstacle, but making direct for the coast, landed at Pevensey without the least opposition, as if upon an uninhabited island. The duke, it is said, as he leaped from his bark, stumbled and fell upon his knees. The soldiers around regarded this as an evil prognostic, but taking up earth in both his hands, he exclaimed, "I accept the omen, and thus take possession of England."[4] Among the troops the first that disembarked were the archers, with short

[1] Roscoe, Life of William the Conqueror, p. 159.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 393.

[3] Simeon of Durham, relates that both the coast and the Channel were left defenceless through want of provisions: "Adveniente nativitate Sanctæ Mariæ (Sept. 8) victu deficiente et classicus, et pedestris exercitus, domum rediit," p. 194.

[4] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2341. Roman de Rou, II. 151. Tradition is fond of attributing the same incidents to different persons, and of interpreting them according to the event. Hardrada, when he stumbled on the banks of the Derwent,

uniforms and closely shaven. Next followed the men-at-arms, clad in coats of mail, and wearing conical helmets of polished steel; their weapons were long heavy lances and straight two-edged swords. After them landed the sappers and miners, workmen, and pioneers, with their wooden towers, which having been brought over in separate pieces were afterwards erected at Hastings.

William's army immediately adopted the policy which had formerly directed the expeditions of the Danes, spreading themselves over the country, plundering, devastating, and murdering, in order to inspire the population with terror.[1] Considering they had to deal with Christian enemies, the rustic South Saxons hoped to escape death by taking sanctuary in the churches; but though fighting under the pope's banner, William's soldiers, bent above all things on plunder, respected neither the claims of humanity nor the sanctity of the altar.

The duke himself, at the head of twenty-five horse, is said to have gone forth from his camp to reconnoitre the country. The people having all fled, no obstacle was encountered, so having advanced as far as they thought proper, the party returned on foot on account of the unevenness of the way. William understood thoroughly the art of winning favour among rough and fierce adventurers. Observing that William Fitz-Osberne showed symptoms of fatigue, he snatched from him the heavy cuirass which he had unbraced, and slinging it with his own upon his shoulders, returned to the army amid the jokes and laughter of his companions.[2]

got quickly up and observed to his soldiers, "A fall is lucky for a traveller;" but the son of Godwin, when he witnessed what had befallen the Norwegian prince, remarked, "A great man, and of stately appearance is he; but I think his luck has left him." Heimskringla, III. 88. These minute superstitions were, doubtless, the progeny of a later age.

[1] Higden, in opposition to nearly all the other Chroniclers, says, he restrained his soldiers from pillage, on the ground that all they saw was their own, III. 286. See also Henry de Knyghton, p. 2341.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, in Guizot's Collection, t. XXIX. p. 395.

While these events were taking place on the coast of Sussex, Harold, exhausted by fatigue and wounds, was at York,[1] taking with his comrades some little repose after the destructive carnage on the Derwent. Circumstances, however, now combined to deny him all rest, and to thrust him irresistibly towards his fall.[2] The best and bravest of his companions now lay stark on the Yorkshire wolds,[3] while of those who remained many were swathed, bandaged, and stiff with wounds, and the remainder almost spent and foredone with weariness; for they had marched nearly the whole length of England, and fought one of the most protracted and sanguinary battles on record. But no respite was allowed them to recover their strength. The plan for the subjugation of England had been organised with prodigious sagacity, and fortune co-operated with policy to give it completion. Ere the gloom occasioned by exhaustion had passed away, intelligence was brought the English king that the duke of Normandy, with an army of sixty thousand men, had landed on the southern coast, and thrown up strong intrenchments at Hastings and Pevensey.[4]

It has been already said, that Aldred, archbishop of York, the whole body of the Northumbrian clergy, with all that was enlightened and patriotic in the land, rallied about Harold, as the last great hope of his country. But there were others who envied him, partly for the splendour of his fortunes, but chiefly for those brilliant qualities of mind and person by which, taken together, he eclipsed all the leaders of his age. Among the lukewarm, it is to be feared, must be reckoned his brothers-in-law, the earls Edwin and Morcar,[5] who afterwards

[1] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 959.

[2] Accordingly, many of the old Chroniclers represent him as urged forward by the pressure of irresistible destiny. Hist. Rames., III. 462.

[3] Radulph de Diceto, p. 479.

[4] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066. Historia Ingulphi, I. 69.

[5] Florence favours the idea that these noblemen entertained some jealousy of Harold, for he says they kept themselves aloof from the contest, but upon hearing news of his death, marched to London, and sent away their sister the queen to Chester (Monumenta Britannica, p. 614). Another interpretation, however,

expiated their want of zeal in his cause by a succession of the bitterest calamities. But neither desertion, nor treason, the coolness of friends, nor the stratagems and devices of enemies, could subdue the ardour or check the impetuosity of Godwin's fearless son. With the fragments of his victorious army, immediately on the news of William's disembarcation, he advanced with the utmost speed towards London, issuing orders as he moved, for the assembling on all sides of the national levy.

Arrived in London, he immediately made preparations for a new conflict.[1] The whole nation had long been familiar with the dauntlessness of his soul, his personal prowess, his commanding and persuasive eloquence, and those noble and kindly manners which endeared him to all who knew him. As many, therefore, as were left of his soldiers instantly put themselves in readiness to accompany him, whether in victory or in death. Every inch an Englishman, no general was ever better qualified to lead the English to battle. All the attributes

may be given to their conduct: they were nearly always slow in their movements, and, therefore, may have intended to do what was right, though wanting the energy to do it at the right time.

[1] As might have been expected, the great event which transferred the crown of England from the House of Godwin to the Norman dynasty, has given rise to endless contradictions. Every move made by either competitor disturbs a swarm of chroniclers and historians who cluster around it, and labour to impart to it the colour of their own imaginations. Malmesbury himself makes several statements directly opposed to each other; Lingard, though not altogether satisfactory, is just and impartial; Dr. Lappenberg seems to confound the adoption of contradictions with impartiality. He observes, for the purpose of damaging Harold's character, that his cause was deserted, not only by Edwin and Morcar, his brothers-in-law, but even by his sister (II. 292). Who, however, is his authority for this statement? No other than William of Poitiers, whose whole account of these transactions is so replete with errors and misrepresentations, that his testimony is altogether worthless, except where he could have no possible temptation to falsify his narrative. His exaggerations are so puerile that they excite laughter. He imagines, for instance, when speaking of Harold's handful of Saxons, that he is describing the hosts of Xerxes, for, by an artful figure of speech, he affirms the English army to have been so vast, that it drank dry the rivers on its passage—the Thames, I suppose, and all. Guizot, Col. Mem. t. XXIX. p. 402.

which distinguish them as a nation he possessed in a pre-eminent degree — frank, honest, liberal, generous without ostentation, religious without bigotry, and superstitious in nothing save in attachment to the soil that gave him birth. His faults were those which we, all of us, more or less inherit. He was wanting in craft, he was even wanting in foresight, and trusted too much to the tempestuous valour of his countrymen and his own. At the head of Englishmen, he could not believe in the possibility of defeat, nor was this greatly to be wondered at, since in person he had never known it, neither had his countrymen when led by him. Whether followed, therefore, by few or many, he believed himself capable of victoriously encountering any odds on the soil of England,[1] and every man that marched under his standard shared his faith.

Observing, however, how the ranks of the English army had been thinned, Githa,[2] his mother, weighed down by sorrow for the death of Tostig, who, though fierce and intractable, was still her son, sought earnestly to dissuade the king from again going forth to battle. Earl Gurth[3] also, his young and intrepid brother, joined his intreaties to their mother's. They probably perceived in his manner something of that feverish excitement which in times of trouble and disaster often seizes upon men, and thought it desirable that, before engaging in the impending struggle, he should taste at least some few moments of tranquillity. Gurth, who had not

[1] The author of the Chronicle of Abingdon having related succinctly the destruction of the Norwegian host on the Derwent, censures Harold for, proceeding against the Normans with a greatly inferior force, I. 483.

[2] To show what value we should attach to the Norman writers of this period, it may be observed that Guillaume de Jumièges, VII. 35, and Ordericus Vitalis, III. 14, gravely assure us that, when his mother attempted, through tenderness, to dissuade him from the field, the chivalrous king of England, the very type of the heroism of his age, silenced her solicitude with kicks and blows. The baseness which could attribute conduct so unworthy to so illustrious a character, would doubtless have been capable of the crime it affects to censure.

[3] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1066.

accompanied him to Northumbria, and was in the enjoyment of unimpaired health and vigour, offered to take the lead of the expedition against the Normans, and intreated his elder brother to remain a few days in the capital to assemble and organise the reserve which he might bring into the field at the critical moment, while he and Leofwine conducted the first onset.

A general and statesmen of cooler head might have adopted the sagacious policy of Gurth. But Harold's position was beset on all sides with difficulties. The chivalry and dash of his character constituted perhaps his strongest hold upon the minds of the people, who might have advanced timidly against the invaders under any other leader. They would probably have inferred that he despaired of his own fortunes and of theirs, and thus by another route the same fatal goal might have been reached. Whatever the wiser course, Harold and his people were too impetuous, too eager to sweep the enemy from our shores, to listen to the voice of prudence. Six days were given up to the assembling of forces, and on the seventh the king of the English put himself at the head of his brave countrymen and advanced rapidly towards Hastings.[1]

The Norman traitors who had been located in England by Edward the Confessor,[2] now performed the work for which they had been sent over. Enacting everywhere the part of spies, they collected and forwarded to William's camp uninterrupted intelligence of the movements of the English. Their information was designed to hasten the hour of conflict, being eager to revenge all the hospitality and kindness they had

[1] The Norman monks savagely exult over Harold, denominate him a fool, insane, mad, and say that God was hurrying him to his punishment. Still, in his own estimation, it was far from disagreeable, since he affirmed, they say, he had never done anything in his life so pleasant as marching against William. Brevis Relatio, p. 6. Guy of Amiens applies to Harold the epithet Sceleratus. De Bello Hastingensi, v. 129.

[2] See the list in Duchesne and Masères.

received from their English neighbours. They assured William that, in a few days, the sons of Godwin would be surrounded by a hundred thousand men,[1] a force more than sufficient to drive the invaders into the sea. Nor was this estimate at all exaggerated; the contingents of Mercia and Northumbria, under Edwin and Morcar, would, in spite of the disinclination of their leaders, have been compelled by public opinion to join the king, as well as the reserve which the deputy-sheriff, Marleswain, had been directed to forward from beyond the Humber.[2] Throughout the southern counties, moreover, where the princes of the House of Godwin were personally known and loved, the levies were putting themselves in motion to follow the Dragon of Wessex.

In truth, the army, at the head of which Harold marched, fell short of a fifth of the estimate of the

[1] Dr. Lappenberg, II. 292, observes with much naïvete that Harold's army was considerably under a hundred thousand and, therefore, praises his firmness in rejecting William's proposals. It was under twenty thousand, and consisted chiefly of men wounded and weary from the previous battle. The language of the Saxon Chronicle is enigmatical. Harold "then gathered a *great force* and came to meet him (William) at the estuary of Appledore, and William came against him unawares before his people were set in order." From this we may perhaps infer that the vanguard only of the English army was engaged, which agrees also with the interpretation of Florence, who says, that not one-half of Harold's troops had yet assembled. He then disapproves of the position taken up, which was so confined that even of his actual followers some found it necessary to fall back. Ingulph, a bitter enemy of Harold, says that, dreaming of an easy victory, he marched against the invaders with a very small body of followers: "Prævolat universos, exercet stimulos, nec de toto exercitu, præter paucissimos, eum aliquis concomitatur," I. 69. The Historia Eliensis (III. 515) agrees with Florence, that Harold advanced against the Normans before half his army had assembled. Higden, Polychronicon (III. 285), states the case briefly and clearly: "Hoc audito nuncio Haroldus de Norrico bello rediens, multum festinavit, pauco stipatus milite, quia multos fortes in priori bello amiserat."

[2] Lappenberg supposes it to have been necessary to leave troops behind in Northumbria to repress the Anglo-Danes, and that these were intrusted to the command of Marleswain (II. 292). This is misunderstanding the statement in Ellis. There existed no necessity for leaving troops, and Marleswain was commissioned to raise fresh forces with all speed and forward them to Harold. Ellis, Introd. to Domesday, II. 185; Gaimar, v. 5252.

Norman spies. The rashness of hazarding the destinies of England on a force so inadequate is doubtless reprehensible—the delay of a few days would have rendered victory all but secure—but the sons of Godwin were incapable of fear, as well as of caution, and so they advanced to find the glory of an epic grave.[1] Harold hoped to make up for the fewness of his followers by the celerity of his movements, which might enable him, he thought, to take the invaders by surprise, and storm their intrenchments during the night.

Having traversed Surrey, he is supposed to have entered the county of Sussex, through the manor of Parkley in the hundred of Skayswell, and parish of Tyshurst, and thence to have advanced by Wilendune, Wigzall, Salehurst, Sadlescombe, and Whattington to Netherfield, where, in consequence of intelligence which met him on the road, he suddenly changed his tactics, and took up a strong position on a range of hills skirting the forest of Waterdown.[2] It has been imagined that the devastation of Sussex was partly accomplished by the English army. But this is highly improbable, since all the land, not in the rape of Hastings only, but throughout the county, was the private property of the king or his mother. This fact, which could not, of course, escape the knowledge of William, may have been a principal reason of the vindictive fury with which he caused it to be desolated. It served, likewise, to stimulate the inhabitants with indignation and resentment against the foreigners, since they were not only fighting the battle of their sovereign, but of the landlord on whose estates they had been born, whose hospitality they had often shared, and with whose castle on the heights of Bosenham they had all been familar from infancy.

[1] The Chronicle of Ramsey, inimical in the highest degree to Harold, says he was urged on to his destruction by destiny. Hist. Rames. III. 462.

[2] Introduction to Domesday, I. 314-318.

Harold had underrated the wariness of his enemy when he hoped to fall on him by surprise. William clearly perceived the results of the violence and brutality of his soldiers, who every day enlarged the circle of rapine, and hourly expected an attack from the enraged population. His intelligence, likewise, of the movements of the English king was minute and unbroken, and he was far too experienced a general to neglect any precaution necessary to the success of his enterprise. From boyhood upwards his life had been passed in arms; the perpetual necessity of guarding against treachery had strengthened the sleepless prudence of his character, and his military abilities, which were of a high order, enabled him to discern and estimate correctly every advantage and disadvantage incident to the position he had taken up.

A soldier so sagacious, so far-seeing, so deeply versed in all the manœuvres and arts of war, could not but be fully alive to the perils of his situation. Stranded by the surges of his own ambition on a foreign coast, and exposed to the attacks of an enemy, with the measure of whose strength, generalship, and material resources he was very imperfectly acquainted, he could not conceal from himself that he must rely for victory less on the valour of his own troops than on the headstrong rashness of the natives. His profound policy, it is true, had put in motion all the forces which could in any way promote his designs. The cruelties perpetrated on the people of Sussex, the robberies, the burnings, the murders, the violations, could hardly fail to goad so chivalrous a prince as Harold into impetuous acts of imprudence. By the swords of his Flemish and Norwegian allies, he had cut off the flower of the English army; even into the remainder, chiefly raw levies collected in haste, he hoped to infuse doubt and hesitation, through the agency of papal influence, which united with cunning fabrications, suspicions, calumnies, and intrepid falsehoods diffused by Norman priests—the fatal legacy which the Confessor had bequeathed to his country—would probably

restrain thousands from following the standard of their lawful king.[1] Still he could not but experience much solicitude when he reflected that the valour which had annihilated the hosts of Tostig and Hardrada, might in reality be directed by greater wisdom than his prejudiced judgment would habitually permit him to recognise in a rival. Hence the rigid discipline, the perpetual watchfulness, the masses, the sacraments, the grovelling devotion to relics observable in the Norman camp.

While the English army was taking up its ground, the king despatched a monastic herald,[2] suitably attended, to the duke of Normandy, with orders that he should quit the kingdom, to which he had neither right nor title. For this William was prepared, and having treated the monk with politic courtesy, sent him back to his lord accompanied by a Norman envoy. When Harold's own people, on their return, were brought into his presence, they are said to have related that there were more priests and monks in the Norman army than combatants in that of England.[3] Amused at their mistake, the king replied with a pleasant smile, "They are not priests, but sturdy and valiant soldiers, as we shall find to-morrow." The mistake arose from the different habits of the two nations, the Saxons wearing their hair and beards long, while the Normans cropped and shaved close like ecclesiastics.[4]

Several of his superior officers, reflecting on the circumstances in which their king was placed, now suggested a policy which other generals in a like situation

[1] Historia Eliensis, III. 516.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 396.

[3] By some chroniclers this account is said to have been given by scouts or spies, whom the duke had detected in his camp, but instead of putting them to death, as he might have done by the laws of war, he showed them his overwhelming strength, and sent them back to infuse terror into their countrymen. Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1066. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 285. But William's chaplain, who was present at the time, speaks only of the monastic envoy. The spies had been sent to Normandy before the expedition set sail.

[4] Higden, Polychronicon. III. 286. William of Malmesbury, III.

had found advantageous; they advised that he should avoid a battle, retreat towards London, and so thoroughly ravage the country as to leave a desert in his rear. But in the matter of honour, no knight of chivalry was ever half so punctilious as Harold. "Shall I" he inquired, "desolate the land which it is my most sacred duty to defend? By my faith, it would be an act of treason; I will rather try the chances of battle with the few men I have, and trust to my own valour and the goodness of my cause."[1]

The duke of Normandy, troubled in conscience by the great act of imposture in which he was engaged, endeavoured by numerous devices to avoid the appeal to arms. He proposed to Harold that they should submit their differences to the decision of the pope, whom he had already bought over to his side; or, he suggested, that the Parliament of Normandy[2] or the Witenagemót of England might be empowered to try their cause, which would have been to treat him, not as a marauding Viking, but as legal competitor for the throne. According to some he made a third offer, which was to submit their claims to the ordeal of single combat; but this is so little in keeping with his character for sagacity, prudence, and caution, that we may safely dismiss it as a fiction. His object, under all circumstances, was to gain time, since additional troops were every day pouring in from the Continent.

No intellectual quality is so rare as the power to look into the future. Neither the king of England nor the Norman duke possessed it; otherwise the latter would have perceived that his chances of success lay entirely

[1] Recueil des Historiens de France, XIII. 229. The imagination of "Master Wace" betrays him into strange absurdities in his account of these transactions. Forgetting that Harold and his brother were gentlemen as well as princes, he attributes to them a series of coarse altercations, interspersed with volleys of abusive epithets, which though they may have appeared becoming to the prebendary of Bayeux, would have been inconceivable to the sons of Godwin. Taylor's Master Wace, p. 145.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 398.

in immediate conflict, while the former would have had recourse to the policy of delay, which would have brought to his aid not only the large reinforcements then on their way to Sussex, but the rain-storms, snows, and bitter blasts of November, which would have shrivelled up the adventurers from the South, and delivered them helpless to starvation or the sword.

History often plays the part of a parasite to success, and thus becomes confounded with romance. The speeches and messages, the offers and menaces, attributed by the chroniclers to the English and Norman leaders have been transmitted to us in the garb of fable. All the transactions of that bloody day awaken in the mind feelings analogous to those inspired by the Œdipus or the Eumenides. It is a vast tragedy—the tragedy of the English nation—that we behold, and Harold, its symbol and representative, appears to be impelled forwards to his doom by some irresistible Nemesis. The grandeur, but not the interest, of the scene is interrupted by the freaks of superstition, at once terrible and ludicrous. Harold and his friends, though occupying the summit of their age's intelligence, were yet not raised altogether above the effects of its atmosphere. Their minds were excited and overawed, when a fanatical priest from the Norman camp, protected by the sacred character of a herald, in which he came, pronounced against them the sentence of Excommunication. Doubt, perplexity, terror, the more powerful because indefinite, were involved in that word. They looked at each other, it is said, and for awhile knew not what answer to make.

At any period of the world's history, utter exclusion from the communion of the faithful must be regarded as a great evil; but when we remember the mental condition of those times, we may form some faint conception of the effect produced by the maledictions of the head of the christian world against a king or nation. During the performance of the fearful ceremony, the

church of St. Peter was hung with black, the bells of the Eternal City rang forth their most dissonant and discordant peals, all the officiating clergy stood—for the cursing took place during the night—each with a torch in his hand, around the great altar; and as the sentence consigning the offender to eternal perdition was pronounced by the sovereign pontiff, all reversed and extinguished their torches, and left the vast Basilica in utter darkness.[1]

Ready, or rather eager, to face danger in the battle-field, the English leaders yet quailed before these spiritual weapons. Their dismay, however, continued but for a moment; speedily recovering the firm temper of their minds, they hurled back the menaces of both duke and pope, grasped their arms and prepared for conflict. By the whole world's admission their king was the bravest of the brave, and, as Englishmen, they felt no way unworthy to be his followers and companions.

The hours of darkness, it is said, were passed in a very different manner in the rival camps; by the Normans, in hearing mass, and confessing their sins; by the English in fierce merriment, in tasting their last banquet, or singing their last songs about their watch-fires.[2] At wide intervals slight reinforcements arrived, consisting chiefly of country people and monks, who, at the call of their country, quitted their cells, and came with a martyr's spirit to find a grave beside their heroic king.[3] Some say there were likewise desertions,[4] and it may be so, since there are dastards in all

[1] Compare Milman, History of Latin Christianity, I. 146, III. 31, 32; Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, II. 348, III. 298.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286, "Angli ut accepimus totam noctem bellum præcedentum cantibus et potibus duxerunt insomnem."

[3] It has been made a question whether the English possessed any cavalry at Hastings. Guy of Amiens says they had horses, but made no use of them, v. 365, sqq. So Ordericus (III: 14), who observes that they dismounted, preferring to fight on foot.

[4] Simeon of Durham accounts for these desertions by observing that the position taken up by Harold was too circumscribed to afford them room to encamp, "Quia arcto

countries; but the reason assigned, namely, that the camp was too small to afford accommodation to them all is absurd, because it was the fewness of their numbers that rendered necessary the contraction of its dimensions.

At length the black 14th of October, in fatality resembling the day on which the Romans fell at Allia,[1] dawned, and the king and the duke drew out their forces in order of battle.

Harold and his faithful brothers Gurth and Leofwine, with the banner of England floating over their heads,[2] took up their position on an eminence, from that circumstance called to this day the Hill of the Standard, and on both sides of them stretched out the English lines, nobles, soldiers, priests, and monks, with bow or battle-axe in hand. On the left ran out seawards a spur of the dense wood, and on the right a deep ravine,[3] masked with brushwood and brambles. Before them the ground descended into a gentle hollow, on the opposite slope of which stood the immense body of the enemy ranged in triple lines, archers, mailed[4] infantry, and cavalry, with the duke of Normandy mounted on a superb charger in the midst. Observing the English order of battle, William inquired where was the king; and a soldier pointing with his finger, replied, "Yonder is Harold, just where the standard crowns the height."[5] It was nine o'clock in the morning, and the October sun, shining through the crisp and clear air, glanced

in loco constituti fuerant Angli, de acie se multi subtraxere, et cum eo perpauci constantes corde remansere," p. 194. Florence of Worcester, as we have seen above, assigns the same reason for the fewness of the English in the battle, A.D. 1066.

[1] Allia, a small river, with precipitous banks, about eleven miles from Rome, where the republican army was defeated by the Gauls under Brennus, and almost annihilated. Livii Hist., V. 37; Flor., I. 13; Cramer, Description of Ancient Italy, I. 305.

[2] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286.

[3] Chronicle of Battle Abbey, translated by Lower. Note, p. 6. De Bello Hastingensi, where Guy draws a curious picture of the whole battle, v.v. 365-380.

[4] Ordericus Vitales, III. 14. Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 402. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286.

[5] Brevis Relatio, p. 7.

from the spear-heads and helmets of polished steel, which twinkled and glittered along the field. The order to charge was then given, and the Norman host, archers, cross-bow men, the heavy infantry with their pikes, the knights with lance in rest descended the hill, while the English, grasping their battle-axes, and locking their shields firmly together, stood like a rock.[1] Mixing strangely the sacred with the profane, the enemy, fresh from the housel and the mass, advanced singing the song of Roland, while Harold and his countrymen, who are said to have passed the night in revelry, chose the Cross of Christ and the Name of God for their battle-cry. William, who concealed a false heart under his cuirass, sought to propitiate the papal Nemesis by taking the field like a necromancer, with a bag of relics[2] about his neck, while Harold, conscious he had right and justice on his side, scorned the symbols of superstition, and presented an unpolluted breast to the shafts of the foe.

Through the defective nature of the accounts transmitted to us, it seems impossible to represent distinctly the manœuvres and evolutions of the contending armies. Swayed by the ideas of chivalry, and ignorant of military science, the chroniclers neglect the strategic movements of the day, to dwell on examples of personal hardihood, relating how Harold at once displayed the abilities of the general and the courage of the common soldier, now directing the movements of the army, and now plunging, battle-axe in hand, into the densest masses of the foe; how Gurth and William fought hand to hand, how the youthful earl speared the duke's horse,[3] while the rider escaped unhurt; how, later in

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286. Guy of Amiens, in spite of his Norman predilections, awards great praise to the English common people, comparing them to a wild boar, which, surrounded by dogs and hunters, scorns alike the teeth of the former and the death threatening arms of the latter, and stands with foaming tusks, ready to gore the first that approaches him, v. 390.

[2] Brevis Relatio, p. 4.

[3] Guy of Amiens, De Bello Hastingensi, v. 474.

the day, William had two other chargers[1] killed under him; how the lines of assailants and assailed, agitated by various impulses, swayed to and fro like the surges of a troubled sea, and how, as long as Harold's soul and body kept together,[2] the fierce small army of the English continued invincible.

The stratagems by which the invaders at length obtained the victory, were of the coarsest and most ordinary kind, so that our reason almost staggers under the attempt to believe that our forefathers were really deluded and overcome by contrivances so shallow and hackneyed. On a hundred battle-fields the Danes are said successfully to have practised the same feints. Dear-bought experience, therefore, ought to have restrained the men of Kent, who formed the vanguard, and the Londoners, who guarded the Sacred Banner of their country, from disobeying their king, and deserting their post to follow pretended fugitives. Yet we are assured, by nearly all the historians of this Waterloo of the Middle Ages, that the duke, finding no impression was to be made by bolt or arrow, sword or lance, upon the serried array of the English, who with their battle-axes clove in twain the lances of his knights, and cut through their coats of mail, ordered a thousand horse to advance, and then, when almost within swing of the English weapons, to wheel about and mimic flight.[3] This poor deception answered its purpose. Stung by the desire of vengeance, and with brain on fire, Harold's companions paused not to reflect, but rushing forwards, and separating in chase of the artfully dispersing foe, were, by a well-executed movement surrounded and cut off from the main body of the army. With their formidable battle-axes they felled many of their assailants to the earth, but were at length hemmed in, and trampled to death, by an overwhelming charge of cavalry.

[1] Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286.
[2] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1066.
[3] Brevis Relatio, p. 8. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286.

But this loss, severe as it was, produced no sensible effect on the English force. Harold's emblazoned warrior,[1] brandishing his weapon, and glittering proudly with jewels, still flapped and rustled over his head, while heaps of gory corpses and pools of blood clearly revealed his station to the enemy. William, however, who is reported by the Norman ballads to have challenged the king of England to single combat, seems to have taken especial care not to encounter him in the field. He is said, indeed, to have headed the cavalry in several charges, and on one occasion to have come in contact, as I have said, with the young earl of the East Anglians, but from Harold he kept aloof, with his bones and phylacteries, either apprehensive of the result of such a conflict, or not caring to look in the face the man whom he had assailed with so much calumny, falsehood, and iniquity.

The famous infantry of England, which has since gained a thousand victories in every division of the world, gave, at Hastings, a foretaste of what it was one day to be. To bolt and arrow, to spear and sword, it remained impenetrable as a rock, so that victory must inevitably have declared for Harold, had the sagacity of his comrades been equal to their courage. Once and again they routed the chivalry of Bretagne and Maine, of France and Acquitaine, and hewed down the bravest of the Norman knights, who turned round and fled before them. The duke, however, felt that, on that field, there was no choice but victory or death. The rumour was once spread that he himself had fallen, at which his whole force began to give way, and would have been thrown into inextricable confusion, had he not, with rare presence of mind, doffed his helmet and exclaimed, "Here I am, look at me. By God's help, the victory will be ours yet."[2] Nor did he rest satisfied with words, but, throwing himself in the way of the fugitives, struck

[1] William of Malmesbury, II. 13. [2] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 14.

furiously at those who were flying from the field, and his efforts being seconded by many other knights and barons, the fight was renewed.

Evening was already approaching, and it still appeared doubtful towards which side victory would lean. Observing, however, the contracted space occupied by the English army, William ordered the left wing of his cavalry to advance and take them in flank. The thickening of the light imparted a doubtful aspect to the heath, and the troops, galloping forwards at full speed without discerning the masked ravine, were precipitated into it, horses and riders, and there slain in such numbers that their bodies filled up the hollow and made it level with the plain.[1]

Every other plan of attack having been tried in vain, William ordered the archers and crossbow-men to shoot high, so that their bolts and arrows might, in descending, pierce the faces of the English. How the fact was revealed, is not stated, but it soon became known that, just as twilight was falling[2] upon the earth, one of these missiles struck king Harold in the eye and entered the brain. A wail probably rose from the bystanders as he fell. His brothers had been slain for some time, together with most of the nobles, whose bodies, mangled and gory, were found in heaps about their king.

Conjecturing what had happened, twenty Norman knights now volunteered to capture the Standard, and bound themselves by a solemn oath to succeed or perish. Advancing, therefore, lance in hand, and in a compact band, they endeavoured to force their way towards the

[1] The Chronicle of Battle Abbey speaks of this ravine as a dreadful precipice, and says it was overgrown with bushes and brambles. In the time of the author, probably about the end of the twelfth century, it retained the name of Malfosse, given to it, in all likelihood, by the Normans, to commemorate the slaughter of their countrymen in it; but the translator, Mr. Lower, confesses his inability to reconcile the description of the chronicler with any place in the neighbourhood. Note, p. 6.

[2] Dr. Lappenberg makes Harold fall long before three o'clock; but Florence, whom he usually follows, says he did not fall till twilight.

body of the dead king; but though without chief or general, what survived of the English infantry still maintained its ground, and after nine hours of fighting and fasting, gave proof that their strength was not yet exhausted. Ten, therefore, of the Norman barons soon lay weltering in their blood, a peace-offering to the manes of Harold. The other ten succeeded in wrenching the banner from the earth, and setting up in its place the standard of St. Peter, which, instead of being to Christendom a symbol of peace, had become a baleful meteor, the presage and cause of misfortune and death. One of these Norman knights, beholding the royal corpse on the sward, glutted his vengeance by piercing it with his spear[1]—a cowardly and ignoble act, for which, it is said, he was disgraced and expelled the army by William.

At length, as night came on, the English broke and fled, closely pursued by the victors. No quarter was given or asked; amid the foldings of the hills, on the plain, in the forest, the Normans wreaked their vengeance on the fugitives as long as the moonlight enabled them to distinguish foe from friend. But the dark, tangled, and intricate recesses of the wood soon rendered the continuance of the carnage unsafe. Though far from satiated with blood, the pursuers, therefore, were reluctantly compelled to interrupt their gratification and return to the battle-field, where they found their leader's tent pitched in the midst of the dead and dying, close to that symbol of fraud and cruelty which the popes denominated the standard of St. Peter.

On the following morning the Norman chief, in the true spirit of a viking, gave his followers permission to rifle the English dead. These spoils, the first fruits of the Conquest, were greedily collected by the Norman gentlemen, the Flemish weavers, and French churls, who had been allured into the expedition by the pros-

[1] Or with a sword, according to Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286.

pect of plunder. This was pleasant Sunday morning's work for a christian army. After the corpses had been stripped, they lay unburied on the heath, stark, bloody, and ghastly in the October sun. Then the roll of his own followers was read over, when it was found that upwards of fifteen thousand[1] men had fallen on that perilous field. These the survivors were now ordered to bury. As fast as possible, therefore, with pickaxe and mattock, holes were dug in the earth to stow away the broken tools with which William had built for himself a throne. It was intimated to the inhabitants of Sussex that the friends and relatives of the slain would be suffered to perform for them the rites of sepulture, upon which mothers and wives, with such rough sextons as the hour could supply, hastened to the spot, and consigned piously to the earth the bodies of the brave. Among these came one illustrious mourner, Githa, the mother of the deceased king. Not reflecting that William would regard her treasures as his own, she offered for the body of her son its weight in gold, but the obdurate victor, whose vindictive feelings had not been quenched even by death, treated her supplication with scorn, and ordered his rival's corpse to be transported to the sea-beach,[2] and buried at high-water mark in the sands. His underlings, however, seem to have proved more accessible than he to pity or

[1] Speaking of the number of the slain, Eadmer says, "tanta strages ac fuga Normannorum fuit, ut victoria, quâ potiti sunt, vere et absque dubio soli miraculo Dei ascribenda sit." Historia Novorum, p. 6.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis (III. 14), whose narrative betokens a strange conflict of feelings, since being an Englishman by birth, he sometimes indulges in patriotic sentiments, but having fixed his abode in a Norman monastery his habitual inspiration is the *genius loci*. Here the Englishman is uppermost. Harold's corpse, he says, being borne to the duke's camp, was, by order of the conqueror, delivered to William Mallet for interment near the seashore, *which had long been guarded by his arms*. According to William's chaplain, "Lui-même dépouillé de toute marque d'honneur, fut reconnu, non à sa figure mais à quelques signes, et porté dans le camp du duc, qui confia sa sépulture à Guillaume surnommé Mallet et non à sa mère, qui offrait pour le corps de son cher fils un égal poids d'or." Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 410.

to interest, since Githa, it is said obtained her noble son's remains, and having caused them to be conveyed to Waltham Abbey, which, before his accession to the throne, Harold himself had built and endowed, they were there, with all due honour, interred by the grateful monks. A tomb was likewise erected to his memory, surmounted by his effigy in stone, which, up to the close of the fourteenth century, constituted an object of secret pilgrimage to devout and honourable persons of English race.[1]

With Harold had perished the hope and strength of the English nation. It was natural, therefore, in an age of poetical ignorance, that his fate should give rise to numerous mythes and legends expressive of the reverential feelings with which the people cherished his memory. Old men, long after the curfew had become familiar to English ears, loved to relate by their firesides at night how their dauntless king, with one of his eyes torn out, and gashed with many a wound, was found on Sunday morning among the dead, and borne half inanimate from the field; how, when his senses returned to him, he caused himself to be transported to the City of Legions,[2] where he assumed the monastic habit; how his beautiful wife was sent to him by her brothers; and how, after long years of penance and

[1] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2343. Higden, Polychronicon, III. 286. William of Malmesbury pretends that Harold's body was ordered by William to be given to his mother, and the author of the Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei., v. 4630, relates that:

"They sought for the body of Harold,
And found it among the slain:
And since he was a king
It is granted that he should be interred.
Through the prayers of his mother
The body was carried on a bier,
At Waltham it is placed in the tomb;
For he was founder of the house."

See also the appendix to Taylor's Master Wace, p. 302, sq.

[2] Henry de Knyghton has collected all sorts of stories about King Harold, but in general his mind was so confused that he scarcely knew whether he ought to lean to the favourable or unfavourable narratives. As, however, the worthy canon of Leicester wrote at the end of the fourteenth century, he could only compile from the chroniclers who went before him. Twysden, p. 2343.

prayer, he at last closed his eyes in peace. At other times the legend assumed a different form. Two monks, it was said from Waltham, inspired with love for their illustrious founder, had followed him to the fatal field, and after his defeat and fall, diligently made search for his body among the slain. Their eyes, however, dimmed by age and tears, were unable to distinguish the features of their benefactor through the mask of blood by which they were disguised. Then went they, it is said, to his mistress, the beautiful Editha, whose fair and lovely form had procured for her the name of the Swan Neck. The eyes of love soon found what those of pious attachment had missed. The remainder of the legend coincides with history, relating that the body was conveyed to Waltham and there interred in the manner I have already described. On the monument two words only were engraved, "Unhappy Harold."

The character of this last of the Saxon kings has been drawn in very different colours by historians, swayed in some cases by the prejudices of race, in others by the force of hostile traditions.[1] It is full time that all influences but those of truth should be set aside. This greatest of the sons of Godwin inherited his father's valour but not his prudence. Forestalling the virtues and tastes of chivalry, he was the very embodiment of honour, bravery, magnanimity, and all knightly qualities, on whose brilliant and daring character, haughty to the powerful, gentle to the weak, Bayard, according

[1] The anonymous author of *The Brevis Relatio* (Scriptores Rerum Gestarum Willelmi Conquestoris, ed. Giles, I. 2), not content with the ordinary version of the Ponthieu story, affirms that Harold took three oaths on the phylactery, called the Bull's Eye. This was a casket which probably received its name from its shape, usually stuffed with the bones of saints, which priests and other superstitious persons sometimes wore as an amulet about their necks. Ducange, Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis, voce Filacterium. Lappenberg, II. 293, rejects and adopts the fiction of Harold's oath, for having shown that there is no evidence of his ever having taken one, he loses sight of his own logic, and talks of his being oppressed by the consciousness of an oath carelessly or faithlessly taken.

to the measure of his ability, may have modelled his own. That his ambition was great. cannot be denied. Born in a private station, he aimed at the throne, but ascended it by honourable means, the favour of his predecessor and the spontaneous suffrage of his peers. Incapable of fear, he was for that very reason often deaf to the suggestions of policy. Prompted by headstrong valour, he sometimes neglected the means necessary in difficult circumstances to insure success.

Harold bore to Godwin much the same resemblance that Alexander bore to Philip. The fathers, in both cases, built up the edifice of glory, in which the sons were destined to enshrine their power. Godwin was the greater statesman, the greater master of politics, because in a higher degree he was master of himself. Occupying the loftiest vantage ground of the age, he could discern with an eagle's glance everything which made for or against him within the circle of the horizon. Gifted, moreover, with consummate patience, he could wait for events, and withhold his hand, even when ready to strike, till the moment most favourable for his purpose. Of this rare art Harold was comparatively ignorant. His soul being wholly without fear, he easily came to the conclusion that apprehending nothing, nothing could subdue him. At the time of his fall, he stood on the very keystone of the arch of manhood, when the mind and body are in perfection, and his athletic frame, tall and majestic, and invested in a proportion which rarely falls to the lot of man with beauty, it was but too natural that he should think lightly of danger. He, besides, united in his own person the blood of the two brave races which had contended during nearly three hundred years for mastery in England—by his father he was a West Saxon, by his mother a Dane. Hot and impetuous, therefore, was his blood. He had reached the age of forty-three; his successful rival was, perhaps, about the same age.

The character most resembling Harold's in the pre-

vious history of the world is that of the Macedonian conqueror, though their fortunes and the stages on which they acted were very different. Alexander, living when the human intellect had reached its culminating point, enjoyed the advantage of the most perfect education ever bestowed on man; being initiated in politics and statesmanship by Philip—in learning, literature and philosophy, by Aristotle. With all that is most beautiful in the arts he was familiar from his cradle; the Iliad and the Odyssey accompanied him on his expeditions into Asia, and the most exalted of mythical heroes appears to have been the model he proposed to himself. Of these prodigious advantages Harold was deprived. Living in an age of grovelling ignorance and superstition, when the mind of all Europe was under the sway of a doting priest who occupied the place where the Gracchi had spoken, where Cicero had philosophised, and where Lucretius had sung, he yet by the mere force of intellect cast away much of the superstition of the times. Still, with the truths, with the poetry, with the virtues of his religion, he strongly sympathised. To him, as previously to his father, all good men were attached. The archbishop beneath his pall, the monk beneath his stole, felt their hearts beat warmly towards their gallant king; and it is one of the strongest proofs of the love of all classes of his nation towards him, that when the dead were stripped by the victors at Hastings, the bodies of the abbot of Hide and twelve of his monks were found with the monastic garb beneath their armour. Upon the whole, the impression created by this man's character in kind, resembles, as I have said, that which is made by the character of the Macedonian king. That one succeeded, and the other failed, is nothing: Alexander might have been slain at the Granicus, and Harold might have been victorious at Hastings, in which case the whole history of mankind would have presented to the student a different aspect. We must not, therefore, in judging of

men, be exclusively dominated by circumstances, but estimate them by the temper of their souls, in which the son of Philip and the son of Godwin bore the strongest possible likeness to each other.

Harold is sometimes supposed to have been swayed by a peculiar desire to perpetuate his memory,[1] because during his short reign he struck so many coins, and possessed mints and moneyers all over the kingdom. A more satisfactory explanation of these circumstances may perhaps be discovered in the difficulties of his position, which demanded a constant and profuse outlay of money. Knowing his end, and looking back over the events of his brief career, writers often seem inclined to attribute to him prophetic power, and the consciousness that his life would be short though filled with glory. Whatever may have been his motives, the numismatic monuments of his reign are numerous, and have been dug up from the earth in several parts of England, almost always in conjunction with those of Edward the Confessor and William of Normandy. Mixed up with the accounts of his mints and moneyers we meet the everlasting question of his title to the throne, which a highly ingenious and learned antiquarian supposes to be alluded to by the word Pax on one of his coins.[2] The "Peace" thus celebrated is assumed to have been that agreement which, after the Return from Flanders, was entered into by the great earl and his sons on the one part, and the king on the other. By one article of this convention, Harold's succession to the crown is believed to have been secured;

[1] Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 400.

[2] "The word Pax, to be found only on the coins of the Confessor, Harold, and William I., intimates it arose from something that had peculiar reference to them. I apprehend it was first on account of the peace between Godwin, Harold's father, and King Edward, A.D. 1052, when he granted his grith or pax to the earl, as the Saxon Chronicle informs us. The particular articles of that peace historians do not give us, but it seems as if promise of succeeding to the crown was part, for the same Chronicle, speaking of Harold's taking the kingdom, says it was as king Edward had granted or agreed with him." North's MS. quoted in Ruding's Annals, I. 390.

though, bewildered by the contradictions of the chroniclers, the author of this ingenious conjecture greatly diminishes its significance by attributing equal credibility to the imaginary compact between Edward and William in Normandy. By impressing the word Pax on his coins, Harold may only have intimated his resolution to preserve, as far as in him lay, the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom, and it is impossible to deny that he exerted himself to the utmost to redeem his numismatic pledge. On Edward's coins we find the same delusive word, which, with still less justification, re-appears on the money of William, whose whole career was an almost unbroken series of carnage and slaughter.

CHAPTER XIX.

EARLY YEARS OF WILLIAM'S REIGN.

THE sea-kings struck the first blow for the conquest of England in A.D. 787; in A.D. 1013 England was overrun by king Sweyn, whose son Canute, after the episodes of Ethelred's restoration, and Edmund Ironside's fruitless struggle, completed the Danish conquest four years later; in A.D. 1042 the Saxon element again became predominant; in A.D. 1066 the Northmen obtained recognised ascendancy, and twenty-one years later, A.D. 1087, exactly three hundred years from the date of their first landing, the subjugation of the island was complete, when the last of the vikings was thrust into a stone coffin too small for his unwieldy bulk in the abbey of St. Etienne at Caen. These heroic brigands, issuing from the fiords and forests of Norway, and other parts of Scandinavia, had already spread terror and devastation over the greater part of Europe, drawn tears from the eyes of Charlemagne, been the incessant scourge of his successors, marked with blood the track of their incursions on the maps of Germany, France, Italy, Africa, Greece, and Asia, where the ruins of cities, monasteries, convents, and palaces, constituted, for many ages, the mementoes of their prowess and ferocity. Cimbri, Saxons, Danes, Normans, had all been cradled in the same land, and formed, perhaps originally, but so many sections of the same family. Thrown apart by circumstances, they were afterwards, at various times, by greed and ambition, precipitated against each other, and in their fierce and

sanguinary conflicts for pre-eminence devastated and stained with blood the fairest portions of Europe. Others[1] have related at length the means by which the Scandinavians effected their conquests in the north of France, and became lords of the province of Neustria, which received from their domination the name of Normandy. There they gradually laid aside the habits of a roving life, applied themselves to agriculture and other useful arts, and were in some degree influenced by what, for want of a better term, may be called civilisation.

But the progress they had made in the arts of life has been strangely exaggerated. When monks felt themselves called upon to institute a comparison between two nations, they naturally gave the preference to that in which their own order exerted most influence; and as the Normans, resembling in this the inhabitants of the rest of France, bowed their necks submissively to the Church, were profuse in their donations to convents and monasteries, and in other respects gave indubitable proofs of their subserviency to superstition,[2] they easily commanded the suffrages of all the chroniclers.[3] But their testimony is liable to exception. Contrasted with the English, the Normans, at the period of the Conquest, may have been entitled to the praise of greater sobriety, partly, perhaps, on account of their inferior affluence, partly through being engaged in incessant wars, but

[1] Palgrave, History of Normandy and England, 2 vols. 8vo. Since my last reference to this learned, laborious, and conscientious writer, he has been gathered to the authors of the past. Long familiarity with his works, which in all my researches, especially into chronology, I have found highly useful, may almost be said to have entitled me to regard him as a friend. His death, therefore, has inspired me with no little regret, more especially as it occurred before he had enjoyed the pleasure of laying his interesting and elaborate work complete before the world. Should the third volume be in a state of forwardness, I trust it will not be long withheld from the students of English history; who, I feel sure, will always be ready to acknowledge the deep debt of gratitude they owe to the memory of Sir Francis Palgrave.

[2] Orderic. Vital., III. 1.

[3] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 86, ed. Maseres. This author relates to William's honour, that he believed in transubstantiation, and fiercely persecuted such of his subjects as refused to agree with him, p. 92.

chiefly through the influence of the climate, since, in their original country, they were distinguished above all mankind for uproarious drunkenness.[1]

It seems to be a received opinion, that success in arms implies superior refinement, whereas if any stress is to be laid on the teaching of history, the reverse is the fact. The Saxons, after occupying England for six hundred years, and passing through every species of vicissitude, addicting themselves to trades and handicrafts, to gardening and agriculture, to industry and commerce, and in some degree to literature and the fine arts, had attained a pitch of civilisation unknown on the Continent, except, perhaps, in Italy and among the Mohammedans of Spain. It has always been one of the characteristics of the English people to attach less importance to domestic architecture than many other nations. It may be true, therefore, that their houses were less spacious than those of the Normans. But in furniture, in plate, in jewels, in collections of antique vases, in illuminated manuscripts, in superb vestments, in wines, spices, rare viands—in short, in all the materials and apparatus of luxury, they far outwent the other nations of Christendom.[2] This superiority they owed chiefly to the immense extent of their foreign commerce, which brought and stored up in London more wealth than was to be found elsewhere in the world. Even then the Thames was crowded with the sails of all nations, which from the Nore to Westminster Abbey were continually passing and repassing each other, lading or unlading, casting or weighing anchor.[3]

[1] Their coming into England in the time of Edgar, even as merchants and traders, is said to have exercised a deleterious influence on the manners of the Saxons, whom they allured into their favourite vice. William of Malmesbury, II. 8.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 432, who, in his inflated style, observes: "Ce pays l'emporte de beaucoup sur la terre de France par l'abondance des métaux précieux; car de même qu'il devait être dit grenier de Cérès à cause de l'abondance de ses grains, de même, par l'abondance de son or, il pouvait passer pour le trésor de l'Arabie."

[3] Vita Ædwardi Regis, p. 417. The writer dwells with peculiar pleasure on the sunny fields and

The women of England also excelled those of all other countries by their acquirements and domestic virtues, as much as by their beauty. They excelled especially in elegant accomplishments,[1] embroidering exquisitely in silver and gold, working after elaborate designs in tapestry, painting portraits and scripture-pieces, as well as fruit, flowers, and trees. From the earliest times, moreover, they had been addicted to poetry, and knew by heart the popular songs and ballads of their country. The knowledge even of Latin[2] was not uncommon among them, and they are said occasionally to have amused themselves with a style of reading to which few ladies in Europe could now be found equal. Long before the Conquest, the richest monastic foundation in Normandy greatly prided itself upon the possession of a superbly illuminated psalter, brought from England by queen Emma in her flight, and by her presented to her brother Robert, archbishop of Rouen. William, one of this powerful prelate's sons, stole the volume from his father's chamber, and gave it to his wife Hawise, of whom he was passionately fond. This psalter, whose destiny it was to be transmitted from one owner to another by theft, seems to have been again stolen from Hawise by her son Robert, who, on becoming a monk of Evroult, bestowed it on the monastery, together with his mother's lands.[3]

Afterwards, when the Conquest had been achieved, William, then no longer duke but king, bore back with him, to his eager and hungry country, the plunder of England, which was so varied in kind, so prodigious in

rich pastures of Westminster. "Intendit ergo Deo devotus rex locum illum, tum vicinum famosæ et opulentæ urbi, tum satis apricum ex circumjacentibus fecundis terris et viridantibus prædiis, atque proximo decursu principalis fluvii a toto orbe ferentis universarum venalium rerum copiosas merces subjectæ civitati."

[1] Les femmes de l'Angleterre son très habiles aux travaux d'aiguille, et aux tissus d'or." Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 433.

[2] Historia Ingulphi, I. 62. Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei, v. 1147, sqq.

[3] Orderic. Vital., III. 3.

amount, that the awe-stricken chroniclers maintain that all the Gauls, if ransacked from end to end, would have failed to supply treasures worthy to be compared with it.[1] The silver, the gold, the vases, vestments and crucifixes crusted with jewels, the silken garments for men and women, the rings, necklaces, bracelets, wrought delicately in gold[2] and resplendent in gems, inspired the continental barbarians with rapture, and in their imaginations made England appear the Dorado of those times.[3]

If we ascend higher still, and contemplate our forefathers in their institutions and laws, in their personal security and widely-extended freedom, we shall discover yet stronger reasons for regarding their social condition as far superior to that of the Normans, among whom feudalism prevailed in its most repulsive form. The duke, or rather earl as he was then called, stood at the head of the social edifice, surrounded by a number of barons, who were all supposed to hold their estates or fiefs from him, and might, therefore, upon the least delinquency be disseized of all, and reduced to indigence. What the prince was to these barons, that was each of them to his vassals, whose relations to their lord were a repetition, on a reduced scale, of those of the lord to his superior. This grinding military system rested at its base upon serfdom and slavery of the most galling and degrading kind, so that the mass of the Norman people under duke William and his predecessors rivalled, in degradation and ignorance, the peasants of Siberia and the Ukraine.

In England very different social arrangements were found; the king lived almost, it might be said, among

[1] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. xxix. p. 432.

[2] Roach Smith, Collectanea Antiqua, I. 99, 103, 104.

[3] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 147. This writer observes, that incredible treasures in gold and silver were sent from the plunder of England to the pope, together with costly ornaments, which would have been held in the highest estimation even at Byzantium, then universally regarded as the most opulent city in the world.

his peers, since the great nobles of the land, the earls of Wessex, of Kent, of Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria were so many princes in rank, dwelt in the midst of their courts like sovereigns, and had at their command huscarls, or guards, to enforce their authority and protect their persons. But their power, however considerable it might be, was subordinate to the authority of the Witenagemót, or great council of the realm, in which they sat beside the king, in company with the archbishops, prelates, and abbots; so that nearly all ranks of people might be said to be represented in the assembly. Here, however, as on the Continent, numbers of men were unhappily found, who, under the name of serfs and theows, might almost be said to have lain outside the institutions of the country, constituting the great blot upon English civilisation, and assimilating it at the base to that of despotic states.

Scarcely an effort had hitherto been made for the emancipation of these classes, which, in spite of the laws, the chronicles, and the researches of modern jurisconsults and historians, are enveloped in almost impenetrable obscurity. What were their precise relations to their masters, in what the peculiarities of their condition consisted, how far the laws interfered for their protection, and what in general were their race and origin we are unable to explain. It has been sometimes suspected that the servile population of later times was descended, in great part, from the slaves scattered through Britain before the Roman invasion, who by each successive conquest were thrust down lower and lower in the social scale, recruited from time to time by criminals, by outlaws, by fugitives from foreign lands, by captives taken in war, and by such wretched unfortunates as through desperate poverty were driven to take voluntarily upon themselves the degrading yoke of servitude. Whatever may have been their history, the existence of servile classes in England, which reflected discredit on its rulers or institutions, was one main cause of its in-

ability to resist invasion, since every foreign army that landed on its shores immediately received large reinforcements from those sections of the population which cruelty and hard usage had converted into the worst enemies of the state.

There had, moreover, been for many ages observable in English society a strong tendency to centralisation, to the creation of a numerous and powerful court, and to the substitution of royal favourites for the ancient aristocracy of the land. Out of this circumstance sprang another cause of the weakness of the realm, which, instead of being studded as of old with the castles of nobles, each forming the centre of a military population, attached by the strongest ties to their lord, and ready to undergo exile, servitude, or death with him, was now almost completely denuded of fortresses, and contained few relics of that aristocratic organisation which the Saxons had originally introduced. Yet there existed everywhere a sturdy and bold yeomanry, always ready to take the field, and well qualified to throw victory into the scale in which they stood.

But there were other influences in operation. Edward the Confessor, though he certainly never contemplated bequeathing his crown to the duke of Normandy, had yet acted blindly throughout his reign, as the agent of his country's subjugation. Hundreds of Normans,[1] through his criminal partiality, possessed lands and influence in the realm, were in several parts intrusted with the command of castles, and everywhere enabled by their wealth or court favour to exert a baleful influence over numerous sections of the population.

Nor was even this the worst. Rome had a powerful and disciplined army encamped in advantageous positions throughout the land — I mean the clergy, who, whether foreigners or natives, were, with very

[1] See a list of the chief of the adventurers, in Masères, p. 367, and in Duchesne, Rerum Normanicarum Scriptores, p. 1023.

rare exceptions, slavishly submissive to the orders of the sovereign pontiff.[1] A few noble prelates, patriots rather than ecclesiastics, adhered steadily to the cause of their country. But when the pope began to fulminate his curses, the hearts of most died within them, and they consented to receive a foreign tyrant rather than risk eternal exclusion from the society of the blessed.

Another feature of English society tended strongly to deteriorate it, I mean the general prevalence of monasticism. So far back as the eighth century, fears had been felt by thoughtful men,[2] of the effects of this tendency, which, however, it was found impossible to check, owing, perhaps, to one of those defects in the social system discoverable all over Europe. To escape from the oppression of the nobles there were but two means—death or the cloister. Men, therefore, in crowds put on the monastic garb, that they might enjoy liberty, or at least exemption from secular authority; and thus the strength of the kingdom was sapped at its foundation, the growth of population checked, the use of arms rendered unpopular, and the country laid open on all sides to invasion. Hence the practice had grown up of employing mercenaries, both in the army and the fleet: Frisians, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes. With the restoration of the House of Cerdic, many signal improvements were introduced, because the great earl of Wessex,[3] alive

[1] Maitland, History of London (I. 37) indulges in very severe animadversions on the conduct of the clergy at this period. "It seems to me," he says, "a matter out of all doubt, that if the Christian clergy at that time had acted upon the same principles of honour and virtue as the pagan priests, the druids, and bards formerly did, this kingdom never would have become a prey to either of those petty enemies—the Danes or Normans.

[2] Bede, Hist. Eccles. Angl., V. 23.

[3] Maitland possessed sagacity to discern as far back as the last century the true character of Godwin: "By the interposition," he observes, "of many of the prime nobility, matters were happily accommodated; by restoring him and his sons to their honours and estates, and banishing those vile and dangerous sycophants, the Normans, who had introduced unjust laws, given false judgments, and committed grievous outrages against the English." History of London, I. 36.

to all the defects and dangers of England, laboured strenuously to impart a new spirit to its civilisation. Under his influence, and that of his sons, the martial ardour of the English revived, together with the love of freedom; but while they were in this stage of their progress, the alliance between the pope, the duke of Normandy, the count of Flanders, the king of Norway, and the earl of Northumbria took place, and by precipitating multitudes of adventurers from all parts of Europe on our shores, pushed back and blighted for ever the spontaneous civilisation of the English people.

William, however, notwithstanding the completeness of his victory at Senlac, apprehending the approach of fresh forces, persisted in hovering long upon the sea, which he regarded as his base of operations.[1] We may therefore dismiss as a wild fable the statement that there were still seven hundred English ships in the Channel,[2] the manning of which is supposed to have absorbed the greater part of Harold's army. It appeared, as well it might, to be incredible[3] that a numerous and powerful people like the English should lose heart upon one defeat, and he consequently reckoned upon having to engage in a bloody series of actions, to which, with his thinned and shattered armament, he knew himself to be wholly unequal. To provide as far as possible against such a contingency, he had ordered his wife, Matilda, whom he left behind in Normandy, together with the barons who formed her council, to despatch across the

[1] Yet several monks, either ignorant or careless of the truth, maintain that he marched directly to London, where he received the submission of the nobles. Brevis Relatio, p. 8.

[2] Sharon Turner, History of England during the Middle Ages, I. 73.

[3] Yet Lingard assumes that William expected the English people to offer him the crown immediately after his victory at Senlac, II. 3. The notion is, indeed, countenanced by the Saxon Chronicle, but is irreconcileable with his anxiety respecting the reinforcements from Normandy. Guillaume de Poitiers may have misled the modern historian by observing, "Le duc Guillaume, avec les troupes de la Normandie, *et sans de nombreux secours étrangers*, soumit en un seul jour, de la troisième heure au soir, toutes les villes de l'Angleterre," t. XXIX. p. 412.

sea with all practicable speed such reinforcements[1] as might come up after his departure from St. Valeri, or which could be got together and organised in the country. One of these bodies of reserve, intending to make for Hastings or Pevensey, landed through mistake or stress of weather at Romney, where, engaging in a conflict with the inhabitants, they were cut to pieces. Receiving intelligence of this disaster, the duke, having strengthened the fortifications at Hastings, and left Humphrey de Tilleul in the place with a strong garrison, marched eastwards to wreak his vengeance on the victors,[2] and having perpetrated a ferocious massacre, pursued his route towards Dover.

Everything in William's movements tends to show that had there been left in England a single general of courage and ability, the annihilation of the invaders[3] might have been found not only practicable but easy. The policy, however, which a thousand years earlier had laid Britain prostrate before the Roman sword, and afterwards facilitated its conquest by the Saxons, now came to the aid of the Normans. Dissensions in the Witenagemót, absurd jealousies among the nobles, divisions and bickerings in the church, altogether prevented the organising of any great plan of national defence. By these causes, the common people were left to provide for their own safety as best they could. Rumours meanwhile of devastation and massacre, augmenting in volume, like avalanches as they rolled into the distance, excited panic and mental paralysis.

To Dover large multitudes of persons had flocked, in the hope of being protected by its castle, built on a scarped rock, a bow-shot in height,[4] overhanging the

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066.

[2] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 137. Ed. Maseres, Orderic. Vital., III. 14.

[3] William of Malmesbury (Vita. S. Wulstani, II. 255), expresses the wonder which seems to have been universally felt in his time, that the fate of England should have been decided by a single battle, and that no united effort was afterwards made by the nation, "quasi cum Haroldo robur omne deciderit patriæ."

[4] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 138.

sea. Its defences had lately been greatly strengthened by Harold, who regarded it as one of the keys of the kingdom. Its size and importance may be inferred from its having possessed a guildhall, and annually, during the Confessor's reign, furnished the king twenty ships, with four hundred and twenty men, for fifteen days.[1]

Immediately on their arrival, the Normans, probably by William's order, set fire to the town, and, in the confusion caused by the conflagration, commenced negociations with the garrison. Upon the nature of those negociations history is silent; we are merely told that the invader proved successful, after which, affecting to commiserate the sufferings of the inhabitants, he bestowed on them a sum of money towards rebuilding their dwellings. Here the victor remained eight days, increasing the strength of the fortifications, and awaiting the arrival of fresh levies from Normandy. During this brief interval his voracious soldiery gorged themselves to repletion on half-raw meat, and in default of stronger liquors swallowed quantities of water; this brought on dysentery, of which many of them died, while others remained enfeebled during the rest of their lives.[2] These victims of gluttony William left with the garrison of Dover, and with the remainder of his army marched along the old Roman way towards the capital.

On no occasion in the history of the world does the evil of divided counsels more strikingly appear. Throughout the kingdom anarchy and confusion prevailed, the nobles and superior clergy, entertaining different views, and broken into factions, contributed by their discords and dissensions to accomplish the ruin of their country. Ignorant and rustic people, however patriotic their feelings, are usually swayed by an instinctive reverence for power. Accordingly, the sentiment which makes certain eastern heretics worship the

[1] Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, I. 190, 192, 257; II. 462.

[2] Orderic. Vital., III. 14.

devil—fear of the mischief he may do them—impelled large numbers of Kentish men to organise themselves into a deputation, meet William on the way, submit voluntarily to his power, and give hostages[1] for their allegiance. Out of this fact a wild legend[2] has been constructed, in which Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, and Egelsig, abbot of St. Augustine's, perform the chief parts. At the head of their followers, we are told, each with a green branch in his hand, so that, like the army of Siward in Macbeth, they presented the appearance of a moving wood, the fantastic Jutes of the lathes approached, and, encircling the Norman Bastard, obtained from his hopes or fears a formal recognition of their ancient rights, which he bound himself never to infringe. This story, however, only deserves notice as a specimen of the fictions by which the unhappy English sought to blunt the sting of wounded national vanity. No effectual resistance was in truth offered to the advance of the victorious army, which after making a brief halt, in consequence of the sudden illness of the general, at a place called the Broken Tower, supposed to have been situated between Sittingbourne and Rochester, pushed on towards the capital.[3]

No full and distinct picture has been transmitted to us of the real state of things at that time in London, though it is certain that its citizens, if properly led, were sufficiently numerous and warlike to resist the assaults of any force that could be brought against them. They had defeated before their gates both Sweyn and Canute, with many other Danish princes, and in military ardour had no way degenerated from their forefathers. Besides, at this moment, large bodies of volunteers were pouring in from all parts of the country, so that, immense as was the size of the capital it could scarcely afford them quarters.[4] But fierce and

[1] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. xxix. p. 414.
[2] Thorn, p. 1786.
[3] See Maseres, note to Guillelm. Pictav., p. 139.
[4] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 142.

angry factions now raged within the city walls, and, even in the Witenagemót itself, some espousing the policy of Edwin and Morcar, whose defection had caused the defeat of Harold at Hastings; others, chiefly bishops and abbots, dominated by papal influence, supporting the claims of William,[1] while a third party with Stigand, Aldred, and many nobles at its head, determined to restore the line of Cerdic, and raise Edgar the Ethel-ing to the throne.[2] . These debates, rendered more fierce and impetuous by the rapid approach of a hostile army, could not divert the minds of the citizens from attention to their own defence. Beholding from their towers the Normans pouring down from the heights of Kent into the basin of the Thames, they sent out in haste a small force, which, crossing the river, encountered on the skirts of Southwark the vanguard of William's army, consisting of five hundred knights, by whom they were worsted, and driven back within their walls.[3] But London was not on that account disposed to surrender to the invader. The citizens mounted guard along the ramparts, the gates were manned, and every approach fortified. Threats and cajoling having been tried and proved fruitless, William reverted to the policy of the ancient vikings, and, to inspire the Londoners with terror, set fire to the whole city of Southwark,[4] and defiling his troops along the blazing houses, marched towards the interior. Meeting with no strenuous opposition, he crossed the river at Wallingford, where he encamped.

It speedily became evident that the fall of England could no longer be averted, for its chiefs and leaders, instead of uniting in presence of supreme danger, madly indulged their individual ambition, and blindly sought

[1] William of Malmesbury, III. A.D. 1066. Johann Fordun Scotorum, Hist., III. 698.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066.

[3] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 142, where the author says William added conflagration to slaughter, thereby to subdue the ferocity of the Londoners.

[4] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 14,

to profit by the calamities of their country. Edgar was immediately discovered to be unequal to his situation. Historians have sought in his extreme youth the explanation of his want of influence; but genius is of no age, and had he possessed it the fortunes of England might yet have been retrieved. His utter want of capacity, which ten months before had caused him to be set aside to make way for the great son of Godwin, now again rendered itself manifest, and blighted the hopes of his friends. In manners and speech a foreigner, he inspired no confidence in the nobles, no enthusiasm in the people.

The chief obstacle, however, to the reconstruction of the Saxon monarchy was the want of patriotism in the clergy, many of them Frenchmen or Normans, who constituted all over the country so many centres of intrigue and disaffection to the national cause. Owing to the compact between pope Alexander and William, they considered themselves bound to promote the interests of the public enemy,[1] and their learning and reputed piety giving them immense influence over their secular neighbours,[2] they were enabled to accomplish more than twenty armies to promote the views of the false and unscrupulous foreigner. The conquest of England was consequently an ecclesiastical achievement; for the rapid submission of the country after the loss of a single battle can be accounted for in no other way. Shame has restrained the chroniclers, who all belong to the sacerdotal order, from fully describing the part taken by the Church in that disastrous period. But, from numerous casual expressions, we discover clearly that they recognised the justness of the accusation preferred against a majority of the ecclesiastical party.

While William remained at Wallingford, his followers developed throughout nearly all the southern counties

[1] Johann. Fordun, V. 2.

[2] Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England, IV. 415.

the terrible policy of the old Danish invaders, delivering cities, towns and villages to the flames, devastating the open country, and indulging, wherever they marched, the utmost license of lust, rapine, and slaughter.[1] In this way, Surrey,[2] Kent, Sussex, Dorsetshire, and Hampshire were covered with burning ruins,[3] an earnest to the subjugated people of the advantages they were to derive from passing under a foreign yoke. In the neighbourhood of the capital, the Norman cavalry pillaged, ravaged, and massacred up to the city walls; and when the dismay of those within was described, by his sacerdotal spies, to be at its height, the duke, with a division of his forces, advanced to Berkhampstead,[4] more completely to menace London. We cannot accept as historical, the poetical description given by a contemporary writer of the state of London at that critical moment. No doubt it was full of anxiety and alarm. The Hanseward or chief magistrate had fought, it is said, at Hastings, and there received many honourable wounds, from the effects of which he still felt it necessary to be carried about in a litter. Scantiness of supplies, which, with the navigation of the Thames uninterrupted, seems hardly credible, furnished a pretext for adopting the policy of capitulation. Extraordinary mystery hangs over all the proceedings then going on in the capital, the obscurity of which is not to be dissipated by adopting the fanciful account of a foreign poetaster.[5] The leading men of the kingdom, however, instead of dispersing, and deserting the king they had set up, appear to have remained about his person, though they originated no judicious plan of action; but, on the contrary, involved themselves and their prince in difficulties so great and multiplied, that at length the only means of escape was absolute submission to the invader.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066.
[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 195.
[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066. Radulph de Diceto, p. 480.
[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 195. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066.
[5] Guy of Amiens, De Bello Hastingensi.

Edwin and Morcar have been accused of deserting the young king,[1] whom they helped to set up, and retreating with their forces to the North, but the best contemporary authority absolves them from this treason, though it testifies, at the same time, to the futility of their loyalty, or perhaps to its hollowness or insincerity. At whatever conclusion we may arrive on this point, we find them[2] included in the deputation which absolute despair of maintaining Edgar on the throne urged the influential nobles and people assembled in London to send to William at Berkhampstead.[3] To demonstrate the absence of all rational ground of hope of insuring the sceptre to the House of Cerdic, it is sufficient to observe the great and noble prelate, Stigand, the friend of the Godwins, and the supporter of England's ecclesiastical independence against the pope, at the head of the embassy.[4] With him went king Edgar[5] himself to lay the crown, which he knew not how to wear, at the feet of the Conqueror. Aldred also, archbishop of York, the intimate friend of the deceased king Harold, with Wulstan of Worcester, another of his pious intimates, the earls Edwin and Morcar, with all the chief nobles and men of London, proceeded in the train of Stigand, persuaded that the power before which his spirit could quail must be indeed formidable.

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1066.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 961.

[3] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 195.

[4] Guillaume Poitiers, p. 142, confuses the whole order of events, stating that Stigand repaired to William at Wallingford, and immediately after representing the army as being within sight of London. Lingard, II. 5, with strange hostility to Stigand, speaks of him as the first to desert the cause of his country, and says he met William as he crossed the Thames at Wallingford —a statement for which he has not the slightest warrant. The Saxon Chronicle, a far higher authority than Poitiers, attributes the hasty recognition of William's power, rather than his claims, not to Stigand, but to Aldred, archbishop of York. Poitiers, with the proverbial inaccuracy of his countrymen, wherever foreign names are concerned, confuses Wallingford with Berkhampstead, transposing to the former, events which took place at the latter town.

[5] Radulph de Diceto, p. 480.

The duke received these distinguished personages with becoming respect and courtesy, and, with the profound hypocrisy natural to his character, embraced the rival king, promising always to be his fast friend. He is accused by history of having practised, on this occasion, a coarse piece of imposture, which must have excited the secret scorn of all who witnessed it: having, from his first landing, proclaimed in the face of the whole world, that he came to vindicate his right to the crown of England, which he asserted had been bequeathed to him by Edward, he now, when it was offered him by the princes, nobles, and prelates of the realm, affected modesty, and hesitated to accept the perilous and troublesome dignity.[1] He is even said to have pushed his dissimulation so far as to have solemnly consulted his Norman friends, every one of whom was aware that he had invaded England for the acquisition of the very throne which he pretended a disinclination to ascend. That he may have taken counsel with them, and listened to the advice of Aimeri d'Acquitaine is probable, but the matters debated in that council must have been of a nature very different from those given in the narrative of his adulating chaplain. The true design of his artificial deliberation and coyness was doubtless to torture the members of the deputation with anxiety and apprehension, and make them accept as a boon what he knew they must regard in their hearts as the greatest of all calamities to themselves and their country. The unhappy nobles and prelates having fulfilled their disastrous mission, and left in the hands of their foe as many hostages[2] as he thought proper to demand, returned by the way they had come, and the victorious duke, elated at the prospect opening up before him, advanced towards London. Instead, however, of ordering his troops to respect the possessions of the inhabitants, as those of persons who, by the late transaction, had become his

[1] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. xxix. [2] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2343. p. 415.

subjects, he permitted his brutal knights and men-at-arms to continue their ravages and devastation during their whole march.[1] He is supposed to have approached by way of Hammersmith and Kensington, but prudently abstained from entering the capital until those soldiers, whom he had sent in advance for the purpose, had constructed that fortress for his reception which is believed to have afterwards expanded into the Tower.[2] Meanwhile he enjoyed so complete a tranquillity in that long sweep of woods and fields, which extended around London towards the North, that he might have indulged, in perfect safety, his favourite sport of the chase.[3]

While the duke remained encamped at a distance from the city, preparations were actively made for his coronation, which it was agreed should take place on Christmas Day. But who was to perform the ceremony? The office of consecrating a king belonged of right to the archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, and William, in order that nothing might be wanting to establish his influence among the people, of whose inclinations and resources he could not as yet form a just idea, negociated with Stigand to obtain the sanction of his high name and character.[4] But the great Saxon prelate, though constrained by events to tender submission to the invader, refused to place the crown on the head of a man still reeking with the best blood of England. This refusal was the signal for all that was base and venal in the church to assail his reputation. Having been nominated

[1] Simeon of Durham particularly notices the burning of towns—exercitui suo villas cremare, et rapinas agere permisit, p. 195. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1066.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, in Guizot's Collection, t. XXIX. p. 416; with the notes of Masères, in quarto edition, p. 144. See also Stow, Survey of London, pp. 17, 23; Maitland, History of London, pp. 37, 38.

[3] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 144.

[4] Bromton observes, that William sought by all kinds of arts and blandishments to obtain the consent of Stigand, but not succeeding, never liked him afterwards, p. 962. Hume, however, adopts the tradition fabricated by hostile chroniclers, that William refused to be crowned by him, and observes quaintly, that he was not much in the Duke's favour, I. 206.

to the see of Canterbury by the Confessor through the influence of Godwin, while his predecessor the fugitive Norman Robert was still alive, and obtained the pall from Benedict[1] the Tenth, whose pontificate, the intrigues of the papal court brought to a premature close, Stigand had been nominally suspended[2] by the Roman pontiff, though in England no notice was taken of his decision, so that the primate continued to exercise the authority and enjoy the revenues of his see. His refusal to invest the Conqueror with the sceptre and diadem converted him into a mark for all the rancour and calumny of the Norman party, who began immediately to assert that he had been deposed from his archbishopric for his crimes, and that William would, consequently, not consent to be anointed by his sacrilegious hands.[3] It was nevertheless not considered politic to attempt his removal from Canterbury, and substitute another in his place. William adopted the policy of disseminating reports injurious to Stigand's character,[4] and conferring on Aldred, archbishop of York, the equivocal and dangerous honour of officiating at his coronation.[5]

Westminster Abbey[6] was chosen to be the scene of the coronation, and a certain number of Saxon nobles were induced, by corruption or terror, to grace the ceremony with their presence. In all ages the English have been fond of exhibitions, and on this occasion a multitude of both sexes thronged the Abbey to behold the death-blow given to their liberties. William's conduct was regulated by a peculiar policy: he wished to

[1] Anglia Sacra, Addenda et Emendanda, I. 791, 796.

[2] Anglia Sacra, I. 607.

[3] William of Malmesbury, III. p. 281.

[4] See Simeon of Durham, p. 195, who stigmatises as calumnious the decisions of the Roman pontiff.

[5] Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 129.

[6] Thierry, History of the Conquest of England, p. 73, supposes Westminster Abbey to have been the church in which the coronation of the English kings habitually took place. But this is an error; no king, save Harold, had ever been crowned in that building, the consecration of which had taken place only one year before. Most of the Saxon kings were crowned either at Kingston or Winchester.

impart to his proceedings the air of a legal and constitutional succession, but at the same time to discover in the conduct of the English a pretext for slaughter and confiscation. Their tameness had disarranged his plans. Reckoning upon a fierce and prolonged contest, he had inspired his followers with the hope of enjoying the plunder of all England, because he was resolved to treat his adversaries as rebels that he might seize upon their property. In itself, moreover, his situation was one of great difficulty. His Norman followers were inordinately greedy of gain, but he might still depend upon their loyalty, which however was far from being the case with those reckless and unprincipled adventurers, who from all parts of Europe had flocked to his standard. These could only be satisfied by confiscations or pillage, and if they saw no prospect of obtaining their ends, might even fall upon him during his coronation, or at any other moment, and cut him to pieces. Of the English, also, it was impossible to be sure. They might put on the mask of loyalty to conceal patriotic designs, and to prevent the placing of the crown upon his brow might excite a tumult and a massacre. From his speech to his soldiers at Hastings, we discover that the horrors of St. Brice's day[1] were ever present to his mind, and may therefore easily understand why he gave secret orders to his Norman guards respecting what they were to do, should any symptoms of insurrection appear while he was within the Abbey.

When all these arrangements had been completed, William, who had lodged during the previous night at a fortress in the city,[2] set out at early morning for Westminster. In the streets through which he passed, the pavement and the fronts of houses were alive with spectators, possessed by the sentiments of

[1] This reference to the massacre of the Danes occurs in Henry of Huntingdon, p. 762, and in the Roman de Rou, II. 187, sqq. Chron. de Normandie, Rec. des Hist. de la France, XIII. 232.

[2] Compare Roscoe, Life of William the Conqueror, p. 202; Thierry, History of the Norman Conquest, p. 73, and Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 416, sqq. Guillaume de Jumièges, VII. 37.

curiosity and alarm. On either side the way was a line of foreign soldiers mounted or on foot, whose strange garb and insolent bearing astonished and outraged the populace. Accompanied by the mitred satellites of Rome,[1] and a handful of English nobles, who consented to prostitute their presence for gold, William moved onwards, passing as he went along the settlement and sepulchre of the Danes, and traversing the little picturesque village of Charing, followed the road leading to Westminster. Gloom and apprehension filled the souls of all who looked on. To impose upon the bystanders by a show of loyalty and attachment, his English courtiers, who, in truth, were only so many prisoners at large, moved next his person, while the Norman barons, with looks of triumph and contempt, encompassed their leader and his poor-spirited victims. In this order the whole cavalcade swept into the abbey, while a formidable body of men-at-arms lined the neighbouring streets to overawe the Londoners, whose fierceness and valour inspired no little uneasiness.[2]

To impart to this dramatic exhibition the appearance of a national act, Aldred, archbishop of York, before commencing the ceremony of consecration, demanded of the multitude of all ranks and both sexes, whom curiosity or baseness had brought together in the Abbey, whether they consented to receive William, duke of Normandy, for their king. Geoffrey, bishop of Coutance,[3] put the same question to the assembled Normans, and both sections of the crowd answering in the affirmative with loud shouts, which reverberated beneath the roof of the minster, the men-at-arms posted without affected to misunderstand the import of these sounds, and to create a pretext for pillage and massacre, set fire to the adjacent buildings.[4] The glare of the flames

[1] Guy of Amiens, De Bello Hastingensi, v. 797.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. xxix. p. 417.

[3] Orderic. Vital., III. 14.

[4] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 145.

flashing in through the painted windows inspired the spectators with extraordinary alarm—men, women, and children made a rush towards the doors, as if in apprehension of immediate death—and elbowing, struggling, and crushing each other, forced their way into the streets, the English to aid in extinguishing the conflagration, the Normans to rob and pillage during the dismay and terror it created. To complete the ceremony, there remained about the high altar only the officiating archbishop, with a few straggling priests and monks. Aldred, in fear and trembling, placed the diadem, the work, it is said, of a Byzantine artificer,[1] on the head of William, who likewise trembled violently.[2] He was doubtless, therefore, in a proper frame of mind to take any oath[3] that might be tendered to him, and swore accordingly to defend the churches of God and their ministers, and to rule the whole people subjected to his sway with justice and clemency; to enact and observe wholesome laws, and to prevent unrighteous judgments, plunder, and rapine.[4]

The disastrous circumstances attending the coronation made a highly unfavourable impression on the minds of the people, and inspired them with the determination to seize on the first fitting opportunity of revenge.[5] Nor were they much conciliated by what followed. The mercenaries, to whose swords William had owed his success, now appear to have become clamorous for their reward, and therefore all the treasures which king Harold had amassed for the defence of the kingdom were lavished on those who had ruined and despoiled it.[6] Funds being

[1] De Bello Hastingensi, v. 750.

[2] Orderic. Vital., III. 14.

[3] The Chronicle of Abingdon, I. 489-490, observes that before Aldred put the crown on William's head, he swore, in presence of the clergy and people, to respect the churches and their ministers, and to govern the nation justly; it then adds, all these things he swore, but not one of them did he perform: hæc omnia Deo vovit, sed nihil horum tenuit.

[4] Simeon Dunelmensis, p. 195. Radulph de Diceto, p. 480. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 962. Stubbs, Actus Pontificum Eboracensium, p. 1712.

[5] Orderic. Vital., III. 14.

[6] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 146.

still wanting to maintain the profusion of the court, and satisfy the innumerable demands which were hourly made upon the sovereign, a heavy tax was immediately imposed on the nation. Norman chroniclers, speaking with levity of the sufferings of the vanquished, represent this impost as a sort of voluntary benevolence, which the English hastened to lay at the feet of their master. In truth, however, they regarded it as an act of extortion and iniquity: men, they said, were weighed down by a grievous tribute, and constrained to buy their own lands of the Conqueror.[1]

The object which William had chiefly in view in racking the people with impost, and collecting treasure from all parts, was to make a magnificent display on his return to Normandy, which he had fixed for the ensuing Lent. During the interval his agents and instruments were incessantly employed in searching out and seizing on the wealth of England, whose capital paralleled for opulence and splendour the metropolis of the Eastern Empire, the type of all that was superb and gorgeous in those times. While this disastrous and dangerous enterprise was in progress, William considered it unsafe to remain in London, whose inhabitants, intrepid and warlike, began to show so many signs of dissatisfaction with their new master, that they were branded with the name of barbarians by the Normans. To conciliate them, however, he is said to have made several prudent regulations, some for protecting women from the violence of the soldiery, others to restrain both officers and men from frequenting taverns and houses of ill-fame, where drinking might give rise to brawls and murders.[2] To curb and overawe them, the fortifications, hastily thrown up for William's residence before the coronation, were now ordered to be strengthened, while others still more formidable were constructed.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1066. [2] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 148.

During the progress of these works, William encamped with his army at Barking, in Essex, whither many of the English nobles repaired to tender their submission, and receive from the hands of the Conqueror the privilege of retaining their own lands and honours. This, however, was far from being granted to all. To gratify his Norman barons, and reward the chiefs of other nations who had supplied contingents for the subjugation of England, immense confiscations[1] were found imperatively necessary, and the operation was commenced with the families of those who had fought or fallen at Hastings, or who had given any evidence of their intention to be present on that fatal field. These were without mercy deprived of their estates, and the foreigners affected to regard it as an act of distinguished clemency that they were not deprived of their lives. Farther to display his placable disposition, William caused it to be made known that the children of such Saxon patriots as would have drawn the sword for their country, but were prevented by circumstances, might, after the lapse of a whole generation, hope to have some small portion of their paternal inheritance restored to them.[2] To superintend the spoliation of his people, the victor made a royal progress through those parts of the kingdom which had already submitted to him. He took measures at the same time for preventing all resistance to his orders, by building and garrisoning strong castles, in which the plunder of the neighbourhood might be stored up and preserved. These fortresses were probably erected on the confiscated lands, consisting of whole towns,[3] manors,

[1] Chronicle of Abingdon, I. 490, where the miseries brought upon England by the Conquest are touchingly enumerated. Had Lingard been acquainted with this work, he would probably not have allowed himself to be misled by the systematic misrepresentations of William's chaplain, for the chronicler of Abingdon was contemporary with the events he relates.

[2] Diall. de Scaccario, printed at the end of Madox's History of the Exchequer, II.

[3] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1067.

and districts, which were profusely distributed among the foreign leaders.[1] The English, it was perceived, were only stunned by the suddenness of their misfortune, and might at any moment be roused from their lethargy, and become formidable to the invaders. Every contrivance, therefore, which prudence could suggest was put in practice to disperse, divide, impoverish, and dishearten the population.[2] Attempts were likewise made to conciliate the mercantile and industrious classes by encouraging agriculture, trade, and commerce,[3] though these indications of civil wisdom were not suffered to appear till the royal troops had ransacked all the shops and opulent mansions in London, and heaped up their spoil at the feet of the Conqueror.[4] Less than three months after his departure from Normandy had sufficed to place on his brow the diadem of England, and he resolved at the end of other three months to return to his ancient dukedom as a king, and display, in imitation of a Roman triumph, the plunder of the conquered realm, together with a long train of captive nobles and prelates.

It has been conjectured,[5] not without probability, that William's design in revisiting the Continent in such hot haste was in pursuance of a nefarious scheme of policy. To those adventurers and soldiers of fortune who had accompanied him in his expedition, he had made promises which the tameness of the English

[1] William Thorn, in his Chronicle, observes that no sooner had the Norman been made king of England, than he degenerated into a tyrant; and having expelled multitudes of nobles, bishops, abbots, and clergy, whose names he says it would be wearisome to enumerate, he seized on their estates and possessions, and bestowed them on his Norman followers, p. 1787. He gave the custody of castles to some of his bravest Normans, distributing among them *vast possessions*, as inducements to undergo cheerfully the toils and perils of defending them. Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 1.

[2] Chronicle of Abingdon, I. 490, where it is stated that the nobles were robbed of their money, and driven by force and insults into exile, upon which their estates were seized.

[3] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 423.

[4] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 418., sq.

[5] Hume, History of England, I. 212.

would not permit him to keep. It has been seen that everything which Norman ingenuity could devise to extract pretexts for confiscation out of the battle of Hastings had been done, without either satisfying the claims of his followers or affording the means of insuring to him their future services. His absence, it was hoped, would foment disaffection, and excite in various parts of the country rebellions, which he would take measures for rendering harmless. Two of his Norman leaders, his brother Odo,[1] bishop of Bayeux, a savage, turbulent, cruel, and rapacious man,[2] and William Fitz-Osborne, at whose instigation he had originally formed the design of invading England, were to be left as his lieutenants, and their greed and insolence, joined with the same qualities in the commanders of castles and garrisons all over the country, would suffice, it was hoped, to goad the natives into revolt, and thus place their houses, lands, fortunes, and families, at the mercy of the ruthless Conqueror.

These arrangements completed, William rode towards Pevensey,[3] where he had ordered the English nobles whom he meant to take with him as hostages, to await his arrival. These were Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, Edgar the Etheling, the earls Edwin and Morcar, Waltheof, earl of

[1] Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 129.

[2] No better authority could perhaps be adduced, to prove the profligacy and ferocity of Odo's character, than that of his own royal brother, who, when solicited on his death-bed to release this rapacious bishop from prison said, "I wonder that your penetration has not discovered the character of the man for whom you supplicate me. Are you not making petitions for a prelate who has long held religion in contempt, and who is the subtle promoter of fatal divisions? Have I not already incarcerated for four years this bishop, who, when he ought to have proved himself exemplary in the just government of England, became a most cruel oppressor of the people, and destroyer of the convents of monks? In desiring the liberation of this seditious man, you are ill-advised, and are bringing on yourselves a serious calamity. It is clear that my brother Odo is a man not to be trusted, ambitious, given to fleshly desires, and of enormous cruelty, and that he will never be converted from his whoredoms and ruinous follies." Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 16.

[3] Guillaume de Poitiers, Guizot, t. XXIX. p. 428.

Huntingdon and Northampton, Ethelnoth, governor of Canterbury, and many other personages of distinguished rank and influence.[1] His object in taking this step was to remove from the realm all such persons as by their wisdom and authority might have prevented impolitic insurrections, or have organised and led such risings as seemed to promised success. There had been assembled in the port of Pevensey a number of vessels with white sails, on board of which William, with his attendants, captives, and plunder, now embarked, like one of the old Jomsberg pirates bearing back to his stronghold the gleanings of land and ocean. It has been thought worthy of record by William's chief chronicler, that on this occasion no congenial sea-king appeared to dispute his passage[2] to Normandy, which having therefore been accomplished in peace, the son of Arlette disembarked in his native land to display before its astonished inhabitants the fruits of his victory at Hastings.

The rigours of a Norman winter had not yet yielded to the influence of spring. It was Lent, but the clergy, eager to ingratiate themselves with the king, abridged the duration of the meagre season, and wherever he arrived, celebrated at once the festival of Easter.[3] When he drew near Rouen, the inhabitants of all ages went out to meet him, dancing, shouting, and expressing their joy, as Rome did at the return of Pompey.[4] All Normandy was equally full of rejoicing, for every man in his degree expected to be enriched by the plunder of England.

William kept his Easter at Fécamp, where arrayed in magnificent English robes elaborately embroidered with gold, and surrounded by the Saxon nobles in the same gorgeous costume, he inspired his own countrymen and

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 1. Annales Waverlienses, II. 130. Florence of Worcester, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1067.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, Guizot. t. XXIX. p. 428.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 2.

[4] Guillelm. Pictav., p. 158, and in Guizot's collection, t. XXIX. p. 433.

numerous princely guests who had repaired thither from France, with extraordinary admiration. Their wonder was no less excited by the profusion of gold and silver plate, capacious vases elaborately chased, with large Saxon drinking horns tipped and rimmed with gold; crucifixes also of the same precious metal, encrusted with jewels, flashed on all sides in the hands of the monks, who, at the sight of so much splendour, imagined themselves already in the heavenly Jerusalem.[1] But what struck the strangers with most surprise was the surpassing beauty of the long-haired Saxon youths,[2] whose lofty expression of countenance, and delicacy of features, rivalling that of the fairest women, reminded many beholders of the beauty of Harold,[3] the *beau-idéal* of the Saxon race. The repasts at which all this magnificence was displayed were so sumptuous, that the guests considered everything they had beheld before mean in comparison, and afterwards, on returning to their homes in different parts of France, diffused far and wide an exalted idea of the opulence and civilisation of England. To strengthen this conviction, William's presents to the clergy of Normandy and France greatly tended. In a majority of the churches of both countries, tapers had been burnt and masses said for the success of his enterprise, and as these superstitious practices were supposed to have greatly aided the conquest, William now displayed his gratitude by bestowing on his sacerdotal allies some portion of the pillage of his English subjects. To one church he sent considerable sums in money; to another, plate and gorgeous ornaments of silver and gold; to a third, richly embroidered vestments for the officiating priests, or to spread at particular seasons over the altars.[4]

Meanwhile, affairs in England were shaping themselves

[1] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 432.

[2] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 435.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 11.

[4] Guillelm. Pictav., Masères, p. 159. Orderic. Vital., IV. 2.

according to the secret desires of William. The barons, inferior knights, and men-at-arms, forming the garrisons of the castles, with which the country was now thickly studded, issuing forth from their strongholds, violated the women, and assassinated or plundered the men.[1] Complaints were addressed to the king's lieutenants, Odo and Fitz-Osborne, but only brought down insult and punishment on those who made them. The martial bishop in Dover fortress, and his colleague in the castle of Winchester,[2] treated the sufferings of the English with derision, and extended their approval and protection to those who vexed and plundered them.

These things soon became insupportable to a people long accustomed to freedom and an equitable government. Numbers, therefore, of the proudest and bravest abandoned their country,[3] either to avoid the sight of maddening wrongs, or to organise in security some means of public deliverance. A portion of these voluntary exiles made their way to Constantinople, where they entered into the formidable corps of Northern body-guards, to which the eastern emperors had long intrusted the preservation of their thrones, their treasures, and their lives. The origin of these guards, known to the Byzantine historians under the name of Varangians, is curious. They at first consisted of Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, who penetrated into Russia, and became at once the protectors and masters of the czars. Vladimir I., desirous of shaking off their yoke, craftily prevailed on the Varangians to transfer their services to the emperors of Constantinople, as better able to reward their fidelity. The fierce but simple barbarians consented;

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 3. .

[2] The French translator of Guillaume de Poitiers, finding *Guenta* in the Latin, supposed it to have some reference to Kent, and therefore, in his version, substitutes Canterbury for Winchester. Guizot, Mem., t. XXIX. p. 425.

[3] Anglorum pæne omnes nobiles, pecuniarum contractum sibi assumentes, extera ad regna convolarunt; quorum mox terræ in regum proscriptæ sunt fiscum. Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon, I. 490.

and the Byzantine monarch readily agreed to encircle himself with the swords and battle-axes of men who, feeling no sympathy with the seditious and restless populace of his capital, and owing their subsistence entirely to his liberality, would naturally make his cause their own. Immediately on the arrival of the English patriots, the Emperor Alexius afforded them congenial employment; for as Robert Guiscard was then advancing with a Norman force from Italy to restore the dethroned Michael, the Varangian force was despatched westward to oppose him, and to its valour and discipline the failure of his enterprise may be chiefly attributed. As these warriors loved to dwell apart, Alexius assigned to them the town of Kibotos,[1] situated on the gulf of Nicomedia. In this settlement, however, they were so perpetually exposed to contests with the Norman freebooters, that the emperor at length judged it politic to remove them to the capital, where they formed the nucleus of an Anglo-Danish colony. Gradually the adventurers from the Baltic became fewer, and the English more numerous, so that in the end the oriental prætorian guards consisted entirely of our countrymen, who, preserving their own manners, language, and hereditary valour, continued to shield the persons of the emperors, down to the latest period of the Byzantine monarchy.[2]

The condition of England became every day worse; and so galling were the insults the people endured, and so urgently did they appear to call for immediate vengeance, that their leaders were betrayed into rash designs, which only augmented their calamities. Negociations were entered into with Sweyn, king of Denmark,[3] who was entreated to undertake an expedition for the recovery of the sceptre of his ancestors.

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 3, where the town is called Chevetot.

[2] Ducange, voce Waringos. Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, X. 221.

[3] Guillaume de Poitiers, t. XXIX. p. 437. See also, Masères' edition, p. 162, with the editor's judicious note.

The people of Kent, who had been among the foremost to tender submission to the Conqueror, becoming impatient of the foreign yoke, organised an insurrection, to commence with the storming of Dover Castle.[1] They had not, however, sufficient confidence in their own strength to make the attempt unaided, and therefore determined to forego their enmity to Eustace, count of Boulogne, and to invite him, now become William's enemy, to co-operate in their enterprise.[2] The count readily consented, and his fleet happening to be at hand, secretly embarked, with a considerable force, and set sail during the night, but through want of convenient transport, most of his men-at-arms were obliged to leave behind their horses. Many circumstances appeared propitious to the enterprise. Odo and Hugh de Montfort were at that time in Essex with a large portion of the Norman force, while the Kentish men from all the surrounding lathes rushed towards Dover to join in the siege. Arriving, therefore, in the dead of night, Eustace at once proceeded to the assault, hoping to take the garrison by surprise; they seem, however, to have gained intelligence, and were on their guard. Having effected a landing, he should have been content to maintain possession of the town for a few days, during which thousands would have flocked to his standard. But he was equally wanting in policy and military skill. The attack upon the castle, though rashly commenced, was carried on with great vigour for many hours of the following day, till, perceiving he made no impression on the place, Eustace, apprehending the bishop of Bayeux' return, was seized suddenly with a panic, and gave the order for retreat. The garrison no sooner perceived the enemy's backs than they threw open the gates, made a desperate sally, and falling furiously upon them, killed great numbers, and filled the remainder with so much terror

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 3.

[2] Orderic. Vital., *ubi supra*. Guillelm. Pictav., p. 163.

that in their bewilderment they rushed toward the cliffs, over which some threw themselves headlong, while others, endeavouring to descend through fissures and crevices, slipped down and were either dashed to pieces on the rocks, or rolled still breathing into the sea. Such as reached the shore hurried so tumultuously on board that they upset the ships, and were thus drowned. Eustace himself, being mounted on a swift horse, effected his escape; his nephew, a youth who bore arms for the first time, was taken prisoner. The Kentish men, striking into bye-ways with which they were well acquainted, dispersed themselves over the country. Eustace now considered it prudent to make his peace with William, and abandon the weaker party, which politicians regard as the best means of succeeding in life.

Throughout England the seeds of rebellion were fast germinating. Men discovered too late the fatal error they had committed by abandoning the cause of their own mild and generous king to take upon themselves the yoke of a despotic foreigner. Fight, however, they would, though it should be of no other use than to rid them of the lives they could no longer enjoy. Yet some, by the prospect of large gains, were induced to adhere to the foreigner, a treason which they had learned to mask with the convenient phrase of being faithful to their allegiance. Among these was Copsi, formerly earl Tostig's lieutenant[1] in Northumbria, and now governor of the country beyond the Tyne, who failed, however, to carry the feelings of his people along with him. Under the lead of Osulf the former earl of Northumberland, they rose in arms against this satellite of the Norman, who retreating into a church was pursued thither and assassinated by Osulf himself.[2]

Still this example did not deter others from pur-

[1] Simeon de Dunelmensi Ecclesia, p. 37.

[2] This chief had for five weeks been wandering about in the woods and mountains in hunger and distress; but being at length joined by a number of his countrymen, proved more than a match for Wil-

suing the same track. At the head of the anti-national party was Aldred, archbishop of York, whose treachery was kept in countenance by that of many other persons of rank and distinction. The people, unable to refine away justice and honour by means of specious phrases, remained true to the cause of their country, which was interwoven with every fibre of their hearts. They recognised in William no right to be their soverign, and prepared for that long and disastrous conflict, which after deluging the soil of England with the blood of her bravest children, ended by the establishment of a feudal despotism. It has been seen that nearly all the great and influential nobles had been carried off as captives to Normandy, but some men of note remained, to whom in their extremity the suffering English appealed, beseeching them to lead the forces of their country to battle against their oppressors. But there was no unity of action, no general scheme of policy. Rash and isolated efforts, the natural results of a government of violence, characterised the period between William's departure and his return, among which was the insurrection in the Welsh marches, headed by Edric Gwilt,[1] or the Wild, and two British chieftains. When the Confessor's foreign favourites had been expelled England on the return of the Godwins, some exceptions were made at the king's earnest entreaty, and among these was Richard Fitzscrope, who for fourteen years had remained with a foreign garrison in command of the castle of Hereford.[2] These strangers, being addicted to plunder, made incessant forays into the lands of Wild Edric, who, when he had organised the means of resistance, assailed the plunderers, defeated them, pursued them in their

liam's partisan. In the following autumn, however, he was himself assassinated. Simeon De Gest. Reg. Angl., p. 204. Orderic. Vital., IV. 3.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D., 1067. This chief was the nephew of Edric Streone, and therefore connected with king Harold by blood. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1006, 1067. Simeon of Durham, p. 197.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1067.

retreat, and ravaging the whole country as far as the River Lugg, returned with immense booty into the mountain ranges of Wales.

William, who foresaw what work he had before him in England, was all this while employing himself diligently in providing for the prolonged tranquillity of Normandy. Acquainted with the temper and character of his barons and clergy, he appointed such individuals to be governors and judges as he thought best qualified to promote his interest; and to insure the support of the Church, relaxed the pressure which he and his predecessors had inflicted on the monasteries. His sagacity taught him where his chief strength lay: the clergy alone could permanently influence the public mind, and he addressed himself therefore in the first place to obtain their enthusiastic aid.[1] In his civil capacity William was no less politic. By voice of herald[2] he proclaimed complete safety to all peaceable persons whether natives or strangers; but as at the same time the severest punishment was denounced against disturbers of the king's peace, he could always strike down his enemies by including them in this sinister category.

William had scarcely completed these necessary arrangements, ere he received intelligence that his policy had begun to bear fruit in England. He learned that an invitation had been sent to Sweyn, king of Denmark, and other chiefs of Scandinavia, to come and rescue the kingdom from the Norman yoke. This was exactly what he had foreseen and desired. Constituting a regency of prelates and nobles to govern his original dominions in the name of Matilda and his youthful son Robert, he hastened towards the coast, and embarking at Arques on the Dieppe, December 6th, 1067, was wafted over by a south wind to the port of Winchelsea.[3]

[1] Guillaume de Jumièges, VII. 38.
[2] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 3.
[3] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 4.

CHAPTER XX.

DEPOPULATION OF NORTHUMBRIA.

THE king on this occasion brought with him Roger de Montgomery, whom he had formerly left governor of Normandy, and upon this favourite he now showered his bounties, making him first earl of Chichester and Arundel, and afterwards of Shrewsbury.[1] As William's ferocity was dreaded, the English, who by circumstances were thrown in his way, particularly the monks and secular officers, displayed all outward tokens of loyalty. He, himself, while studying whom and when to strike, cloaked his fell designs with affability and courtesy, bestowing smiles and the kiss of peace[2] liberally on those whom he meant to destroy. To the Normans, as far as seemed prudent, he disclosed his real intentions, warning them to look for nothing but disaffection and treachery from the English; while with the latter he employed the same craft, endeavouring to create in them the belief that he secretly espoused their cause, and was desirous, by awakening their caution, to put them on their guard against their enemies—a term by which he wished them to understand he meant the Normans.

In spite of all these arts, those divisions only of the kingdom yielded him obedience in which he had built castles and maintained strong garrisons. In the northern and western provinces the natives cherished that wild independence which they had enjoyed under the

[1] Dugdale, Baronage of England, I. 26. Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

[2] Id. ibid.

Saxon kings. On the walls of Exeter was first unfurled the standard of freedom. The population, partly British and partly Saxon, was numerous and warlike,[1] and distinguished for that restless and proud disposition which generally belongs to dwellers on the sea-coast. Nor did they rely exclusively on their own strength. Negociations were entered into with the neighbouring cities and towns, for the purpose of organising a patriotic league for the public defence; foreign merchants who happened to be in the place were detained to afford what assistance they could; the old walls and towers were repaired, new fortifications thrown up, and the presence of Githa,[2] the mother of their late king, inspired the inhabitants with double enthusiasm. Accompanying the queen-mother was Blacheman, a priest of great opulence, from the neighbourhood of Abingdon, where, on the beautiful holme of Andresey he had erected a church at his own expense. From the description bequeathed to us of this structure, we are constrained to form a high idea of Blacheman's architectural taste as well as riches. In both wings of the building were numerous apartments for the accommodation of monks—refectories, dormitories, and kitchens —the whole profusely adorned with paintings and bassi-rilievi executed with wonderful delicacy, and displaying extraordinary magnificence. Hither the monastic lords of Abingdon would seem to have repaired to be instructed by this singular ecclesiastic in science, art, and eloquence, in return for which he enjoyed the revenues of several estates and hamlets. It is to be presumed that his immense wealth was now placed at the service of his country, since he unquestionably shared the hostility of his royal mistress towards the truculent invaders.[3]

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1067. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1068.

[3] Historia Monasteria de Abingdon, I. 472, II. 288. With Githa, the priest Blacheman shortly after departed from England, to which he never returned.

Intelligence of these proceedings having been brought to William, who had been celebrating his Christmas in the capital, he immediately prepared to march westwards for the purpose of quelling what he affected to regard as an insurrection against lawful authority. During the interval between his arrival in London, where he was received with great marks of honour and rejoicing, and his departure for the siege of Exeter, he granted to the City its first Norman charter, composed, however, by way of flattery, in their own language.[1] It was as concise as if it had been drawn up by the Spartan Ephori, declaring all the citizens, both French and English, to be law-worthy, that every child should be his father's heir, and that he would protect by royal authority the inhabitants from injury. This was the boon; the equivalent was presently exacted. Having conceded to his trusty and well-beloved citizens the rights to which they had all been born, he next called upon them to prove their loyalty by the payment of a heavy war-tax,[2] the levying of which was carried on to the utmost limits of his sway. Every contrivance was resorted to for the purpose of breaking the spirit of the English, which, directed by no enlarged policy, but bursting forth irregularly and without concert in different parts of the country, he clearly perceived might in time be altogether crushed.

With a formidable force of infantry and cavalry, he began his march towards Devonshire, traversed the intervening heights, and pushed forwards his vanguard to within sight of the walls. The old viking system of warfare was still rigidly adhered to; the Normans, as

[1] Maitland (History of London, I. 37, 38), observes, "This charter consists of four lines and a quarter, beautifully written in the Saxon character, on a slip of parchment of the length of six inches, and breadth of one, which is preserved in the city archives as a very great jewel. . . . . The seal, which is of white . . . . . being broken into divers pieces, they are sewed up and carefully preserved in an orange-coloured silken bag. On one side is the Conqueror on horseback, and on the reverse he is sitting in a chair of state."

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1067. Inportabile tributum Anglis indixit. Henry de Knyghton, 2344. Radulph de Diceto, p. 482.

they advanced, spreading themselves right and left through the country, plundering, burning, and devastating, partly to glut their cupidity and vengeance, partly to diffuse terror. On approaching the capital of the West, the Conqueror summoned its principal citizens to come forth and take the oath of fealty; but overawed by the people, whom even then perhaps they meant to betray, these vacillating magnates replied, that they would neither swear allegiance nor admit him within their walls, though in conformity with ancient usage they consented to the payment of tribute.[1] Relying on the strength of his army, with which, for the first time, English levies were incorporated, he observed, haughtily, that it did not suit him to possess subjects on such conditions, and immediately made preparations for commencing the siege.

It then became manifest that, within the city, timidity and divided counsels prevailed. With or without the consent of their fellow-citizens, the thanes or chief men of the place repaired to William's camp, entered into articles of capitulation, and gave hostages for the due performance of their undertaking. The people, however, on their return repudiated the whole proceeding, and resolved upon a vigorous defence. William's anger, always ready to blaze out, was converted into fury by these proceedings, and riding up with five hundred horse, he took one of the hostages and tore out his eyes before the gates,[2] to show the partisans of independence what treatment they had to expect. As this act of barbarity produced no other result than to inspire the citizens with still greater hatred[3] of the tyrant, active operations were found necessary, and the siege began.

Exeter stands in the midst of a plain, rich, fertile, and dotted with clumps of trees; its meadows are among the

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.
[2] Ordericus Vitalis, *ubi supra*.
[3] Henry de Knyghton relates an anecdote, not admissible in history, in proof of the scorn with which the people of Exeter regarded the Norman king, p. 2344.

greenest in England, and breezes from the sea temper the summer's heat and the winter's cold. Its river, the Exe, emerges at a short distance from a chain of lovely hills, and rolling its clear and sparkling waters along the ramparts, falls into the sea, a few miles below the city. The woods were then thicker, and the country, therefore, even more picturesque, than at present. The king's army, which was very large, invested the city on all sides; for eighteen days operations were carried on without intermission; the walls—undermined below and battered above, while incessant showers of missiles were sent against the garrison—began at length to give way, and the confidence of the inhabitants abated. However, propositions of surrender were not made until the illustrious Githa[1] had put her treasures on ship-board, and escaped safely out to sea. With her, the sister of Sweyn, king of Denmark, and numerous ladies, who apprehended that violation to which the Normans invariably subjected the women of captured cities, departed, and took refuge on the Steep Holmes, a little island in the mouth of the Severn, which had, for many ages, afforded a refuge to the Danes, whence, after a brief stay, they pass[illegible] the count of Flanders,[2] and took up their residence at St. Omer.[3]

Then the principal citizens, accompanied by numbers of the loveliest women in Devonshire,[4] with a large body of clergy, bearing the sacred books, pixes and crucifixes, went out to the king and made their peace with him.[5] As it would not have suited his policy to destroy so large a city, and massacre its inhabitants, he, feigned to be actuated by clemency; and preserving the place for the sake of the revenues it would yield, pardoned the innocent inhabitants, and posted strong guards at the gates to prevent the entrance of the army, which

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 197.
[2] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 963.
[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1067.
[4] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.
[5] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1067.

would have led inevitably to universal havoc.[1] But to put a bridle in the mouth of the city, he selected a commanding spot, and there laid the foundations of a castle, from the red colour of the hillock on which it was built called Rougemont, after which he marched away, leaving Baldwin De Meules,[2] one of the sons of Gilbert, earl of Brion, with a number of other knights and soldiers, to complete and garrison the fortress. To wreak his vengeance on the West Britons who had aided the Saxons in the defence of Exeter, he carried his arms into Cornwall, devastating and confiscating as he moved along, and having by these means re-established tranquillity, disbanded his army, and repaired to celebrate the Easter festival at Winchester.[3]

Regarding himself as firmly seated in England, he now sent for his queen, Matilda, who had hitherto been regent of Normandy, and she accordingly came over, accompanied by many Norman knights and ladies, as well as by a multitude of priests, among whom was Guy, bishop of Amiens, author of a dull and libellous poem on the battle of Hastings.[4] During the Whitsuntide festival, [redacted] England by Aldred, archbishop of York.[5] Some historians have imagined that the title of queen was unknown to the Anglo-Saxons: erroneously,[6] since it prevailed in every state of the Heptarchy, till the crime of Eadburga occasioned its abolition.

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

[2] Ellis, Introd. to Domesday, I. 377. Baldwin, one of the king's generals at the battle of Hastings, was likewise called De Brion, De Sap, and De Exeter. He had the barony of Okehampton, which was his chief seat, and the castle of Exeter, which, as has been stated, he completed at the king's command. He obtained, as his share of the plunder of England, nineteen houses in Exeter, and 186 manors in Dorsetshire and Devonshire. His father was son of Godfrey, earl of Ewe, a natural son of Richard duke of Normandy, the Conqueror's grandfather, Lyson, Mag. Brit., I. note. Dugdale, Baronage of England, I. 254.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 4.

[4] Monumenta Britannica, pp. 856, 872. Wright, Biographia Britannica, II. 15.

[5] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 197. Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 129.

[6] Thierry, History of the Norman Conquest, p. 81.

William's queen now enjoyed an opportunity of gratifying at once her avarice and her revenge. Throughout the West the estates of the English and British nobles were profusely confiscated to enrich the Norman adventurers, and Matilda selected, as her share of the spoil,[1] the lands of Brihtric, a Saxon earl, whose princely possessions lay scattered through nearly all the southern counties of England. This nobleman[2] had been sent by Edward the Confessor as ambassador to Flanders, while Matilda was still a maiden, at her father Baldwin's court. She became enamoured of the Englishman, and made known to him her passion; but he, either because he had already a wife at home, or loved some other woman, declined the honour of an alliance with Baldwin's daughter, who never forgave the affront, and now, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, indulged her implacable vindictiveness. Not content, however, merely to be enriched with his estates, she caused the man she had formerly loved to be shut up, during the remainder of his life, in a fortress at Winchester, there to expiate the crime of having disdained a queen.[3]

Matilda now became once more prolific, and within a year after her arrival in England gave birth to a son, who received the name of Henry, and, because born in the purple, was declared heir to all his father's dominions on this side the Channel.[4] This fact, to which sufficient

[1] A Norman monk, who however was not contemporary with the events he relates, affirms that William bestowed on his wife the whole county of Kent, in return for the galley, called Mora, which she presented to him before the invasion. Script. Rer. Gest. Will. Conq., p. 22.

[2] Compare Palgrave, Proofs and Illustrations, p. 294; Monasticon, III. 59; Taylor's Master Wace, p. 65.

[3] Sir Henry Ellis (Introduct. to Domesday, II. 55) says that the anonymous continuator of Wace, who wrote in the reign of Henry III., is perhaps the oldest authority for this account of Matilda's disappointment; but in Domesday itself the fact that she became possessed, in part at least, of Brithric's lands is distinctly intimated. Speaking of four manors in Cornwall, the record says: "Infrascriptas terras Brictric tenebat et post Mathildis Regina." Domesday Book, I. 120. Her manors in Gloucestershire had also been Brihtric's. I. 163.

[4] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4. According to the Brevis Relatio, Prince Henry used to contend, that he alone was the king's son; his elder brothers being merely the sons of the duke of Normandy, p. 9.

weight has seldom been attached, explains the hatred and hostility which always prevailed among the sons of William.

Nothing illustrates more strikingly the difference between the English and the Normans than the facility with which the latter overreached the former,[1] so that if craft be a proof of civilisation, the superiority was unquestionably on their side. In this, as in other things, William stood at the head of his nation. His frauds were masterly. There was no engagement into which, to gain his ends, he would not enter; there were no promises or oaths which, to forward the same purpose, he would not break. Knowing the power and influence of the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, he applied himself diligently to discover the means of compassing their ruin. Towards this end, the most effectual step was to profess friendship for them, and display an inclination to make them members of his family. He knew that the earl of Mercia loved his daughter Adela; and as the Saxons generally, but especially the noblest, were more impassioned than politic, he laid snares for his feet, through the purest affections of the heart. As far as a Norman's word could bind, Adela was given to Edwin, who consented to abdicate his position in England, as well as in history, to obtain this princess's hand.

Two years, however, after the battle of Hastings, the brother earls were involved in the meshes of insurrection, by the impotent patriotism of their subjects. William's promises and professions now became more lavish than ever, and Edwin weakly consented to pacify and bring over to the invader nearly a third of the kingdom, for the possession of the fair Adela.[2] He accordingly laid down his arms; but, supposing the storm to have been appeased, William immediately broke his faith, and refused to accept Edwin for his son-in-law. If any hint of these negociations transpired, it must have cooled the ardour

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 4.

[2] Orderic., *ubi supra.*

of the people in the cause of the great earls. Stung, however, by the insult offered to their family, they again flew to arms, and openly or secretly sent emissaries throughout the realm, to rouse the English to revolt.

At such a moment the Kymri consented to lay aside their hereditary quarrel with the Saxons, and descend from their mountains to cöoperate against the common enemy. All the chiefs of the revolt met together, and having enumerated the wrongs and injuries they had sustained, entered into a solemn league and covenant to expel the foreigners or perish in their enterprise. Thousands of brave Saxons took possession of the fen country, where they constructed what was called the Camp of Refuge, in the Isle of Ely, deemed the most inaccessible of all the marsh-lands. Here, far as the eye could reach, nothing was visible upon the surface of the marshes but vast beds of sedge, reeds or willows intersected at frequent intervals by sluggish streams and pools of water, which, filtrating into the earth, created those quaking bogs into which men and horses often sunk and were lost. In this dreary district the standard of England was now raised.

All the provinces beyond the Humber were likewise in commotion, hasty fortifications were thrown up, and multitudes of brave men encamped under tents in the open field, binding themselves by an oath never more to dwell under a roof until they should have driven the strangers from their shores.[1]

As the better part of the country was in the hands of the insurgents, this revolt would probably have ended in the utter extirpation of the Normans had the leaders of the people proved themselves worthy to be at that people's head. Still nothing could exceed the popularity of Edwin and Morcar. In a country where admiration for beauty exerted so overmastering an influence, their preëminently handsome persons cast a spell over

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

the popular mind, especially when united with the purity of their manners, the high excellence of their characters, their lavish generosity, their active and sincere piety, and their almost boundless wealth. Far and near the monuments of their devotion, churches, convents, monasteries, beautified the face of the country. By the bounty of the females of their family the altars were adorned with the most costly ornaments; crucifixes, and jewelled vases, gorgeous vestments, and purple hangings inwrought with gold. No wonder, therefore, that they had the prayers of the monks and clergy, all of whom joined with the grateful poor in offering up daily supplications for them, and invoking blessings on their heads.[1] Supported by so strong a popular feeling, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, had they been equal to their fortunes, might have organised a force which would have insured victory to the English. Unfortunately they belonged to that class of men who aim at advancing public prosperity by substituting arguments for the sword, and ruling a turbulent generation by appealing to the unrecognised principles of justice. Accordingly they made overtures to William for peace, and, in appearance, obtained it. He suppressed all indications of hostility till he could strike with effect.

This pacification, which all genuine Englishmen perceived to be false and hollow, diffused the utmost apprehension and distrust through Northumbria, several of whose chiefs immediately prepared to escape from a country which discord, indecision, and treachery had manifestly doomed to total subjugation. At the head of these was Marleswain, whom king Harold, before the battle of Hastings, had commissioned to bring up the Northumbrian contingent. Cospatric, also, with many other nobles from that part of England, resolved by expatriation to escape the tyranny of William, and

[1] Orderic. Vital., *ubi supra.*

embarking on board a ship in the Humber with Edgar the Etheling, Agatha, his mother, and his two sisters, Margaret and Christina, sailed for Scotland,[1] where they were received and hospitably entertained by Malcolm.

While these events were taking place in the North, Godwin, Edmund, and Magnus, the sons of Harold,[2] who upon their father's death had taken refuge with Dermot, king of Ireland, returned with a small fleet, furnished by that prince, to their own country, and sailing up the Avon, attempted to take Bristol by storm. The citizens, however, unwilling for their sake to embroil themselves with the Normans, resisted the attempt of the young princes, who, failing in this part of their enterprise, entered Somersetshire with their forces, and subjected the whole country to pillage and devastation. Against them marched the man who most of all might have been expected to join their standard, Ednoth, who had been master of the horse to king Harold their father. His baseness and ingratitude, however, received their just punishment, for encountering the youthful chiefs in battle, he was slain with the greater part of his forces, after which, collecting immense booty, the exiles retreated to their ships, and sailed back to Ireland.[3]

England, at the time of the invasion, possessed few fortified positions or large castles,[4] into which garrisons might throw themselves to check the progress of an enemy, harass his flanks, and render it unsafe for him to move in any direction except with an overwhelming force. The respite William now obtained he devoted

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 198. Bromton, p. 966. Knyghton, p. 2344. Annales Waverleienses, II. 131.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1069. Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1067, where, however, the chronology of these events is extremely confused. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 198.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1068.

[4] Wace, in describing the invasion of Sweyn, dwells on this want of fortified posts as one of the causes which laid England open to the ravages of an enemy, I. 327. Taylor's Master Wace, p. 266.

to repairing the error of the Saxon kings. He saw that England was only to be ruled by castles, and adroitly seized on every opportunity of erecting them.[1] One of his fortresses arose at Warwick, and was intrusted to the command of Roger de Beaumont;[2] another at Nottingham,[3] which he committed to the care of William Peveril,[4] one of his bastard sons; a third was constructed at Lincoln, and many others were built along the frontier line, which separated what might now be called Norman from Saxon England. The natives beheld with dismay the multiplication of donjon keeps, and battlemented walls, from whose summits their deadliest enemies reconnoitred their lands and houses. Terror now did the work of arms. York threw open its gates to the Conqueror, who, to insure its fidelity, strengthened the ancient castle, erected a new one, and placed in them garrisons of chosen warriors.[5]

The fashion of submission having been thus set, spread far and wide. Archil, the most powerful chief of the Northumbrians, hastened to make his peace with the king, and Egelwin, bishop of Durham, following in the same track, put on the Norman livery, and became the bearer of William's terms to the Scottish king. This prince, though he had entered into engagements to furnish aid to the English insurgents, now thought it more prudent to side with the Normans, and accordingly sent back ambassadors with Egelwin, who in his name swore fealty to William, to the great satisfaction it is said of his subjects, who, though fierce and war-

[1] Guillaume de Jumièges, VII. 42.

[2] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1068.

[4] His mother was the daughter of Ingelric, founder of the collegiate church of St. Martin's-le-Grand, who had been mistress to William while he was yet duke of Normandy. She was afterwards married to Ranulph Peverell, who permitted the duke's bastard to assume his name, and be enumerated among his children. Dugdale, Baronage of England, I. 436. For an account of the possessions lavished on William Peveril, see Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, I. 226, 467.

[5] Florence of Worcester, A.D 1068. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 198.

like when roused, habitually preferred ease, quiet, and application to religious exercises.

During this year the ladies of Normandy[1] gave the world a striking proof of how much they had degenerated since their migration from Scandinavia. Like the Spartan women during the Messenian war, they became impatient of the absence of their lords, and by repeated messages gave them to understand that if they did not speedily return, they would choose for themselves others in their places. This exhibition of intrepid profligacy had in some cases the desired effect. It placed, however, the whole of the Norman knights in a perplexing position. If, at the importunity of their wives, they abandoned their superior lord while engaged in war, and surrounded by dangers in a foreign land, they would be branded as traitors and cowards, while if they adhered to their political and military duties, their wives might inflict indelible disgrace upon their names and families. To retain them, William made the most lavish offers, promising additional lands, and more sounding titles; but affection and respect for the honour of their Houses outweighed with many all other considerations; and Hugh de Grantmesnil, Humphry de Tilleul, and many others, relinquished their chances of promotion in England, and returned to their hearths.

Numerous anecdotes are related of Norman ladies quite in harmony with this account of their licentiousness. William's own cousin, Adelaide, effected her husband's destruction by means of a poisoned apple, while besieged with him in the castle of St. Ceneri, and his niece Judith accomplished the ruin and death of her husband, Waltheof. Mabel, wife of Roger de Montgomery, enjoyed the reputation of being a wholesale and reckless assassin, who poisoned the viands she presented to her guests, and occasionally took off the wrong person by accident. No one who incurred her

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

resentment was safe. Moving about from castle to castle, and from abbey to abbey, with a retinue of a hundred men-at-arms, she exhausted and plundered those who offered her hospitality, and on one occasion seems to have narrowly escaped falling a victim to the treachery of which she was so liberal; for on being reproached by the abbot of Evroult for the number of her retinue, she threatened at her next coming to bring along with her a still more formidable train. The abbot, in reply, menaced her with the wrath of heaven, and on the following night she was seized by so violent a disorder, that probably conjecturing the cause, she fled in all haste, and during the remaining fifteen years of her life, never again visited the abbey of St. Evroult. Her husband's only brother, Gislebert de Montgomery, she poisoned by mistake; and Arnold de Giroie fell a victim to her hatred of his family. Not, however, being able to accomplish his destruction with her own hands, she effected her purpose by those of his chamberlain, who administered to him the poison, in company with two other nobles, who were saved by their physicians, while Arnold perished. At length a fate worthy of her crimes overtook her. Having enjoyed a bath, she retired to her luxurious bed, at Bures on the Dive, where Hugh, a gentleman whom she had despoiled of his inheritance, burst, with his three brothers, into the chamber, and cut off her head. It was a dark December night, the rivers were flooded with rain; the assassins, as they fled towards the frontier, with the design of making their way to Apulia, broke down the bridges behind them, so that although her son, Hugh de Montgomery, with sixteen other knights, was in the castle, and immediately rushed forth in pursuit, Mabel's enemies escaped, and nothing remained to her friends but to consign her body with a lying epitaph to the grave.[1]

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, III. 2, 3, 9, V. 13.

As the king, however, could ill-spare the chiefs whom his warm-blooded countrywomen thus withdrew from the English wars, he invited adventurers from the whole Continent to join his standard, and it having been discovered that the service in which they were to be engaged was far more profitable than dangerous, crowds of the idle and dissolute from most countries of northern Europe flocked across the Channel. It seems probable that such of the Norman warriors as had not grown tired of the conflict prevailed upon their wives to accompany them to England, where, in some cases at least, they were allowed to resume the honours and estates, which they had forfeited by their desertion.

Over all England, famine, pestilence, and civil war, did their worst. There was no safety anywhere for natives or strangers. The mercenary soldiers, under the command of reckless leaders, devoted themselves on the one hand to havoc and desolation, while, on the other, the native Saxons dealt death around them wherever they had the power.[1] The surface of the whole country was stained with blood, and there seemed to be a rivalry between different races as to which should perpetrate the most mischief.

At length William formed the resolution to dismiss his mercenaries, who, gorged with plunder and familiarised with violation, rapine, and murder, were no longer available in a military point of view. Laden with booty, therefore, and soiled by every species of crime, the odious adventurers set sail to enjoy the rewards of their guilt on the Continent. This was a deliverance at least to the king, but the wretched people lay still exposed to the ravages of equally destructive foes. Among many of the Norman leaders the idea of extermination was evidently uppermost in the mind. Between them and the natives, no intercourse existed save that of wrongs and revenge. In several

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 4.

parts of the country the Saxons were always in arms, fighting, though without policy or foresight, for the freedom of their native land, while the Normans, with superior arms and discipline, and led by able generals, fell here and there unexpectedly upon the unwary natives and butchered them without mercy.

York had hitherto proved the utmost limit of Norman-England towards the North. It was now resolved to carry forward the frontier line to Durham; and Robert de Comines, with a force of seven hundred chosen men,[1] was despatched to take possession of the city of St. Cuthbert in the king's name. Throughout the country the Saxon clergy were in a state of much perplexity, their natural affections inclining them to side with the people, while their policy, as churchmen, impelled them in the contrary direction. It has been seen that Egelwin bishop of Durham, had already taken the oath of fealty to William, and been employed by him in a diplomatic mission to Scotland. On learning, however, the approach of Robert de Comines, he went forth, with conflicting feelings, to warn him of the evils which would probably spring from his attempt upon Durham. The insolent foreigner treated his caution with scorn, and entering the city in a hostile manner, slew a number of serfs belonging to the church; after which, confiding in the terror he had created, he took up his residence in the episcopal palace, while the soldiers, dispersing, quartered themselves in different parts of the city.

The advance of the Normans through Northumbria had not been unobserved. Determined to escape William's yoke or perish, the inhabitants assembled in considerable force, and marching through the long winter's night,[2] appeared before Durham at break of day. No danger being apprehended, the gates remained unguarded, so

[1] Thierry, p. 86, speaks of De Comines' force as inconsiderable; but Walter de Hemingford, to whom he refers, says his army was large — exercitus copiosus. Chronica, c. 3.

[2] January 28th, A.D. 1069.

that the Northumbrians burst through them without difficulty, and spreading themselves over the city, cut down the Normans in the streets and houses till the whole place ran red with blood. They then assailed the bishop's palace, which was defended by a body of archers, irritated by whose bolts they set fire to the building, and the earl with all his followers perished in the flames. Egelwin had either been forcibly excluded on the preceding evening, or else contrived to effect his escape during the attack. One foreign soldier only survived the slaughter, to bear tidings to the king of what had happened.[1]

The confused chroniclers of the times, speaking of the events which were crowded into this memorable year, A.D. 1069, mention a second descent of the sons of Harold in the west of England. The good fortune which had accompanied their former expedition, on this occasion forsook them; for, encountering the king's forces, under Brian, son of Eudes,[2] count of Bretagne, and William Gualdi, they were defeated with immense loss, and returned, with two out of sixty-six ships, to fill all Ireland with mourning.[3]

The circumstance, however, which at this time chiefly disturbed the Conqueror's mind, was a knowledge of the great armament which had long been fitting out against England on the Baltic shores. Sweyn, king of Denmark, nephew of Canute the Great, had been prevailed upon by a variety of motives to espouse the cause of the oppressed Saxons in England.[4] The gold of this country had freely flowed northward, and enabled him to imitate on a smaller scale the policy of William himself. He invited adventurers from every part of Scandinavia and northern Germany to enlist under his standard, and

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 198. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1069.

[2] Guillaume de Jumièges, VII. 41.

[3] Orderic. Vital., IV. 5. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1069, makes the number of ships sixty-four. Guillaume de Jumièges, sixty-six.

[4] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1069.

towards the end of summer despatched his fleet, consisting of two hundred and forty sail,[1] and bearing the flower of the English exiles, to the mouth of the Humber. Some insignificant division of this armada may be supposed, from the narratives of the Normans, to have sailed along the southern and eastern coasts, either to distract the attention of William's leaders, or to excite the natives to revolt; but, having touched at several places, they also made towards the North, and joined the main fleet in the Humber.

The Etheling Edgar, Marleswain,[2] earl Waltheof, and several other nobles, likewise arriving with a small fleet from Scotland, joined the Danes.[3] Earl Cospatric, too, with the land forces of Northumbria, marched to the banks of the Ouse, and the whole allied army, thus concentrated upon one point, prepared for the assault of York. The city was immediately invested, on one side by the Northumbrians, on the other by the Danes. William Fitz-Osborne, the king's lieutenant in the North, apprehending that the assailants might demolish the surrounding houses, in order with the materials to fill up the castle ditch, caused them to be set on fire, and a strong wind prevailing at the time, the flames spread, and becoming irresistible in their progress, reduced nearly the whole city to ashes, including the monastery and minster of St. Peter. Archbishop Aldred, we are told, terrified at the prospect of the siege, and the numerous evils which his own treasons had helped to bring upon his country, died before the arrival of the besiegers, and was buried in St. Peter's.[4]

The operations of the siege were pushed on with the utmost vigour; the Normans, issuing forth from behind their intrenchments, fought in the streets hand to hand with the besiegers; the defence was protracted during eight days; but at length the royal fortresses were taken

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1069.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1069.
[3] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2344.
[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 198; Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1069.

by storm, and upwards of three thousand[1] Normans perished in the carnage. Gilbert de Ghent, William Mallet, his wife and two children, were spared for the sake of ransom, and sent as prisoners to the Danish ships. Immense treasures are said to have been found in the castles. Earl Waltheof, with a strong garrison, remained in possession of York; the great body of the Northumbrians, with Cospatric at their head, retired beyond the Tyne, and the Danes betook themselves to their ships, which lay at anchor in the mouth of the broad Humber.

To the number of leaders, Osbern, brother of king Sweyn, Harold and Canute, his sons, earl Thorkill, and bishop Christian, in addition to the English princes and earls, we may attribute the distracted counsels which directed the movements of the allies. No commanding mind was at their head. Intent partly on bloodshed, partly on booty, they would appear to have been satisfied for the moment with the slaughter at York, and to have formed no rational design for the future. A great general would have followed up his first success by a rapid march with his united army upon the South, which would have imparted courage to the natives, and smitten the foreigners with dismay. The prudence which the allies lacked, William possessed. Having recently dismissed large bodies of mercenaries, whom crime and plunder had demoralised, he had supplied their places with other adventurers from various parts of Europe, and by their aid, united with a subtle policy, hoped to break up the formidable league, which had been organised against him. He was hunting, it is said, in the forest of Dean, when intelligence of the siege of York reached him. All the fury of his savage nature was roused, and in his usual profane manner he swore, by the Splendour of God, to pierce all Northumbria with a single spear,[2] and having drawn together his forces, hastened northwards to perform the congenial task.

[1] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2344.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, Annals, A.D. 1069.

On arriving at Pontefract, William found that the river, swollen by the autumnal rains, was unfordable, and through its torrent-like character, impassable by boats.[1] Of those around him, some counselled a retreat, others the construction of a bridge. He would listen to neither, but remained sullenly inactive during three weeks meditating on plans of vengeance.

At the end of this period, one of the knights in his army, patiently examining the channel of the river, at length found a place where it was fordable, and crossing over with sixty men-at-arms, encountered and put to flight a small body of Northumbrians. Returning and giving an account of his discovery to William, the whole of the Norman forces crossed the river. The difficulties and dangers of the route which William's army was now compelled to follow, are emphatically dwelt upon by the chroniclers. It lay, they tell us, through forests and marshes, over hills and along vallies, where the paths were sometimes so narrow that two soldiers could not march abreast.[2] In this way they drew near York, where they learned that the allies had broken up their camp and dispersed. According to some,[3] the garrison of York made a stout resistance, but was at length overcome, and William entered the city at the head of his troops. He now applied himself to all those arts of craft and dissimulation by which, on many other occasions, he had paved the way to victory. Sending messengers to the Danish prince, Osbern, on board his fleet, he is said to have purchased his defection from the English alliance with vast sums of money. In order, moreover, to derive still further advantage from this compact, he conceded to the Danes the privilege of plundering along the whole eastern coast of England, on condition that early in the spring they would return to their own country. William is also said to have won over several

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 5.
[2] Ordericus Vitalis, *ubi supra.*
[3] Matthew of Westminster, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1069. Thierry amplifies and perplexes the whole narrative, p. 88.

English nobles, by putting on the guise of friendship and entering into solemn engagements to repress the insolence and rapacity of his countrymen.[1] Having taken these precautions, repaired the castles, and left in them a strong garrison to check any attempts that might be made during his absence, the Conqueror continued his march through an almost inaccessible country, overgrown with trees, fully resolved to accomplish the extermination of the Northumbrians.

He had for this purpose concentrated in the North all his disposable forces, which, consisting chiefly of adventurers and freebooters, were prepared without the least scruple to execute his most sanguinary orders. To accomplish his plan of extermination, he spread his camps over a surface of one hundred miles, and having thus hemmed round the Northumbrians, gradually contracted his military cordon, expelled them from their fastnesses, drove them into a narrow compass, and then fiercely applied himself to the work of slaughter. The hideousness of the transaction has paralysed the power of the chroniclers, so as to disable them altogether from entering into particulars. What they relate they tell as it were under their breath, with horror and reluctance, in gloomy general terms, which, however, suffice to impress the mind with loathing and abhorrence. Having followed the ruthless Bastard through an almost endless series of atrocities, the monk of Evroult exclaims on this occasion, "Never did William perpetrate so much cruelty!"[2] The towns, villages, hamlets, and scattered habitations throughout Northumbria were reduced to ashes; all the implements of agriculture—carts, ploughs, harrows—were piled in heaps and consumed with fire; the corn was burnt in the granaries, horses, cattle, sheep, were slaughtered in the fields or at the stalls—in short, every-

[1] Florence of Worcester, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1069.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 5.

thing that could serve for the support of human life was utterly consumed. The tyrant gave full sway to all the ferocious passions of his nature, and gloated his eyes upon the wasted lands[1] and the innumerable corpses of the slain. No Red Indian hunted to madness by a hostile tribe ever displayed so unappeasable a passion for blood. His breast was steeled against compassion, and wherever a Northumbrian appeared he was cut down by the swords or pierced by the lances of the Normans.

As William desired to obtain the reputation of a good Catholic, he interrupted these bloody operations in order to celebrate the festival of Christmas, A.D. 1069, at York, and to make the deeper impression on the minds of the populace, sent to Winchester for his crown, his jewels, and other regal ornaments, decked with which he blazed before the eyes of the multitude like a great king.[2]

In a country abounding with woods and thickets, it was found impossible to destroy a whole population by the sword. Multitudes escaped, and concealed themselves either among the forests or in caverns. Their concealment was vain; nearly everything that might have contributed to the sustenance of life had been annihilated, so that on all sides were seen helpless infants, timid women, and grey-haired old men, wandering to and fro in search of a morsel of bread. But no bread was to be found, and it is calculated that in the famine which ensued more than a hundred thousand[3] persons perished, in addition to those who had fallen during the massacre. In the houses, in the streets, on the roads, in the fields, festering and putrid bodies remained unburied, the number of the dead being too great to be devoured by the wild beasts, or the flights of kites and ravens that descended like clouds upon the place of carnage. The wretched remnant of the popu-

[1] William of Malmesbury, III. p. 283.

[2] Orderic. Vital., IV. 5.

[3] Orderic. Vital., *ubi supra.*

lation sought to prolong their existence by feeding on the flesh of horses, dogs, and cats, and hunger at length obliterating from their breasts all sentiments of humanity, they assailed each other, and devoured human flesh.[1] By these means an immense tract of country, extending from the Humber to the Tyne, was reduced to a desert,[2] and historians writing after the lapse of nearly a hundred years, relate that it still remained a wilderness in their times.[3]

To augment the misery of the Northumbrians, Malcolm, king of Scots, in the interest of his brother-in-law the Etheling, made an irruption into those provinces which had now, through necessity, submitted to William. Advancing through Cumberland, and descending into Teesdale,[4] he spread his marauding forces right and left, as far south as Cleveland;[5] burning towns, monasteries, and churches, often together with the congregations who had taken refuge in them. While the Scots were thus engaged, Cospatric, who had purchased the earldom of Northumbria from William, burst suddenly into Cumberland, where he perpetrated against the subjects of Malcolm atrocities similar to those which the Scottish king had committed in England, after which the earl returned, with immense booty, to his castle of Bamborough.[6] The ravages in Northumberland, however, still proceeded, and were characterised by horrors and cruelties, difficult to be conceived.

In all ages, men unenlightened by religion and philosophy have shown themselves incapable of pity. The Scots, we are told, derived entertainment from multiplying the sufferings of the English; old men and women they decapitated as of no use; infants, for the same reason,

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 199. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1069.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1069.

[3] William of Malmesbury, III. Walter de Hemingford, c. 3. Thomas Stubbs, p. 1708.

[4] For a description of this valley, see Camden, Britannia, p.p. 771-774. M'Culloch, Statistical Account of the British Empire, I. 41.

[5] William of Malmesbury, III.

[6] Simeon of Durham, De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 200.

were tossed into the air, and received in their fall on the points of pikes, which pierced or impaled them, after which they were flung to the dogs.[1] Young able-bodied men and women, who might be sold as slaves, or employed as domestic servants, in their own country, they drove before them like a herd of cattle, despatching immediately such as fell through fatigue. So great was the number of these captives, that all the towns, villages, hamlets, and even cottages, near the border were supplied with English slaves,[2] who performed every kind of drudgery for their ignorant and ferocious masters.

William had meanwhile been called southwards by the devastations of the Kymri along the marches, having previously, however, received, in the valley of the Tees, the submission of Waltheof in person, and of Cospatric by his envoys. It was the depth of winter; the summits of the mountains were covered with snow, the roads obstructed with corpses, or miry with blood; he continued his march however to Hexham, and there organised his expedition against Chester.[3] The mercenaries now became tired of following at his heels through the passes of snowy mountains, and over bleak plains swept by the icy east wind. These were chiefly the men from Anjou, Bretagne, and Maine, who would have been well content to garrison castles, and make forays against the helpless inhabitants, but looked with terror on an expedition undertaken in the depth of winter against the fierce and terrible barbarians of the Kymrian mountains.

William, who could now recruit his armies from the native English, was by no means sorry to find a pretext for ridding himself of these troublesome foreigners. He, therefore, gave them to understand, that whoever was cowardly enough to desire it might take his discharge, and go where he pleased. He himself, with such of his troops as followed him cheerfully, advanced

[1] Walter de Hemingford, c. 5., A.D. 1070.
[2] Simeon of Durham, p. 201. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1070. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2344.
[3] Orderic. Vital., IV. 5.

in the month of January, amid torrents of rain and hail, over bogs and quagmires, and through narrow and difficult mountain-passes, which according to the chroniclers had never before been traversed by cavalry. Provisions falling short, they were sometimes reduced to feed on the flesh of horses which had been suffocated in the morasses. The king, however, set them the example of endurance, sometimes advancing on horseback, sometimes dismounting and leading the way on foot, requiring the aid of no one, though always ready to assist those who needed it. In this way he kept up the spirits of his troops and reached the environs of Chester, where by his usual cruelty and ferocity he suppressed the insurrection. Then, having built a castle to overawe the inhabitants, he proceeded to Shrewsbury, where he erected another fortress, and left ample garrisons and provisions in both.

Having reached Salisbury, he took the decisive, but no longer dangerous step of dismissing great part of his foreign troops. They had accomplished the work for which he had hired them, and he now desired nothing so much as to be delivered from their presence and importunities. He, therefore, paid and dismissed them, with such expressions of flattery as despots condescend to employ towards their instruments. Those who had threatened desertion, he punished by retaining them forty days longer than their comrades.[1]

Having thus reduced the whole kingdom to subjection with the exception of the fens, William had recourse to a grand measure of spoliation[2] for replenishing his exhausted treasury. It had been customary in England, from time immemorial, to convert the monasteries during periods of great public danger into banks, in which the noble and opulent[3] deposited their jewels, gold, silver, costly vestments, and other valuable pro-

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 5.

[2] Walter de Hemingford, II. 459. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1070.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1070.

perty. As the Norman invaders professed the same religion with themselves, they trusted that the edifices which they esteemed sacred would be respected. They, however, misunderstood the character of William, who reverenced nothing but force. By the advice of the earl of Hereford, and others of his council, he issued an order in February, A.D. 1070, that all the monasteries in England should be searched, and the riches found in them, to whomsoever belonging, conveyed into his own exchequer.[1] His queen, Matilda, had already commenced this pious operation by plundering the great monastery of Abingdon. Having, soon after her arrival in this country, learned from those delators, who had now become as numerous in London as they had been under the most infamous of the emperors at Rome, that the church of the above abbey possessed many rare and precious ornaments, she despatched thither her emissaries, with orders to bring them to the palace.[2] The abbot and his brethren, who had incurred the king's anger, met together on receipt of these commands to deliberate on the selection of the ornaments they should lay at the feet of Matilda. Their modest offerings were spurned, and they were required to bring others more choice and precious. The articles by which the queen's avarice was at length satisfied, were a chasuble richly embroidered in gold, a gorgeous cope, worn by the priests while officiating in the choir, an albe, a stole, and a copy of the Evangelists, crusted with jewels.[3] William on the present occasion, far from contenting himself with confiscating the wealth which secular persons had brought to the churches for safety, took away the crucifixes overlaid with gems, the golden chalices, and all the gorgeous sepulchral ornaments, with which those sacred buildings were adorned. Nay, to place their inmates completely at his mercy, he robbed

[1] Historia Eliensis, III. 516.
[2] Historia Monasterii de Abingdon, I. 485, 491.
[3] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1070.

them of their charters and privileges granted during a long succession of ages by nobles and kings, and which at the commencement of his reign he had bound himself by oath to respect.[1]

The policy of the Conqueror had been from the beginning to depress the natives, and exalt foreigners. Nearly all the influential nobles were in exile, or in their graves; their estates had passed into other hands, their honours were possessed by strangers. It was now determined to complete this policy by making a thorough clearance in the Church. Pope Alexander II., William's accomplice at Hastings, had sent over three legates, by whose crafty counsels the Church of England was to be remodelled.[2] By their suggestion, a synod was convened at Winchester, in which the fate of the English clergy was definitively sealed. A beginning was made with the great archbishop Stigand, the tried friend of the Godwins, the counsellor of Harold, the anointer of Edgar the Etheling, and the stoutest advocate of England's ecclesiastical independence. The offences with which he stood charged were designed to conceal his real crime—his unshaken attachment to his country, which in 1066 had led him to refuse to place the crown on the head of William. For this, he had been dragged as a captive into Normandy, and regarded as an object of incessant suspicion, till the favourable moment for accomplishing his ruin should arrive. The tranquillity which the sword had established throughout the land now enabled the king to wreak his vengeance equally on layman and priest. Stigand's accusation was divided into three heads:[3] first, that he had unjustly held at the same time the sees of Winchester and Canterbury; second, that he had accepted the primacy during the lifetime of Robert, the former archbishop, in whose pall

[1] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1070.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis (IV. 6), where, however, by the error of some copyist the name of Windsor has been substituted for Winchester.

[3] Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 130.

he had sometimes arrayed himself during the celebration of mass; third, that he had received investiture from pope Benedict the tenth, accused of owing to money his advancement to the papal throne.[1] When his worst enemies sat in judgment on him, he had little mercy to expect. By the sentence, accordingly, of the king and the legates, he was deposed from his archbishopric, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment at Winchester.

It does not appear to have troubled the consciences of the legates, that they were committing one of the offences for which they punished the English prelate, namely, raising one primate to the episcopal throne during the lifetime of another, since Stigand was only removed to make way for Lanfranc. Throughout the country, the native bishops and abbots shared the fate of the primate, some being accused of crimes, others of ignorance. Whatever might be their virtues or their learning, they could not deny that they were Englishmen, and as this was the sole reason of their degradation they were thrust ignominiously out of the church, and cast into prison, where they lingered out their unhappy lives. Among others, Wulstan, bishop of Worcester, was summoned to resign his mitre and crosier in Westminster Abbey. Having received them from the predecessor of Harold, he strode up to the Confessor's tomb, and striking it with his pastoral staff, apostrophised the dead king, exclaiming, that from him he had received the episcopal symbols, and to him only would resign them.[2] This stroke of policy had the desired effect: he was suffered to retain his bishopric.

The object of this revolution was to obtain command over the popular mind,[3] by substituting foreign for native influences. The English monks and clergy

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 201.

[2] The Chroniclers add a miracle: as the bishop, they say, struck the tomb with his crosier, the stone became soft, and the pastoral staff sank into it. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 976. Annales Burtonenses, I. 264.

[3] Eadmer, Historia Novorum, p. 6.

had, in many instances, enrolled themselves in the national forces, and fallen for their country. Even those dignified ecclesiastics who, through superstition or want of foresight, had at first favoured the claims of the Norman duke, would afterwards appear to have adopted a nobler policy, and thrown their weight into the opposite scale. They now paid the penalty of their patriotism, and foreign prelates, clergy, and monks, repairing in droves to England, filled the episcopal palaces, the monasteries and the churches. The nation was restrained, therefore, by a double force: in every town and city there rose a Norman castle, garrisoned by foreigners, in which the plunder of the natives was deposited; and, close beside it, a Norman abbey or priory, in which the revenues of the English church became the prey of strangers.[1]

At the head of this body of sacerdotal adventurers stood Lanfranc, a native of Northern Italy,[2] where he had been educated for the law, and distinguished himself, it is said, by his eloquence. Quickly perceiving, however, that the road to honour lay not, in those ages, through secular pursuits,[3] he abandoned his country, and became a monk in Normandy, where the ignorance of all around him at once gratified his vanity and facilitated his designs. Opening a school, first at Avranches, and afterwards at Bec, to which numbers desirous of knowledge eagerly flocked, he soon acquired an immense reputation. Up to this period the Normans are said to have been wholly unacquainted with literature,[4] so that the credit of awakening their minds, and directing their attention to what was then called learning, must be attributed to Lanfranc. By degrees he became known to the duke, who, as the reward of certain services he had rendered him at Rome, bestowed on him the abbey of Caen.[5] At

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 201.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 7. Compare Milman, History of Latin Christianity, III. 322, 323.

[3] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 968.

[4] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 7.

[5] Gervase, Actus Pontificum Cantuariensium, p. 1652. Eadmer, Historia Novorum, p. 6.

this time flourished the famous Berengar,[1] who, anticipating the reforms of a future age, assailed the doctrine of the Real Presence,[2] one of the main pillars of catholicism, and in this is supposed to have been abetted by Lanfranc. Afterwards, however, the supple Lombard, when it became dangerous to profess sympathy for Berengar, wheeled round,[3] maintained the orthodox opinion, and inveighed, with all the eloquence and bitterness of which he was master, against the tenets of his former friend.[4]

In the incidents of such a career, William discovered reasons more than sufficient for desiring to have this crafty ecclesiastic near his person, and, as soon as events permitted, invited him to fill the archiepiscopal seat at Canterbury.[5] According to established custom, and in strict imitation of William himself, Lanfranc put on the disguise of modesty, and affected reluctance[6] to undertake the responsibilities of so high an office; but in all such contingencies there is an infallible means of conviction: Lanfranc succumbed to an imperative sense of duty, and the insatiable thirst of power; and became the equal in everything but name of the Roman pontiff himself, from whom, notwithstanding, he condescended to solicit and receive the pall.

Shortly after his accession to the archiepiscopal throne, Lanfranc, no less grasping and greedy of revenue than

[1] Milman, History of Latin Christianity, II. 450.

[2] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 940.

[3] Capgrave, Chronicle of England, p. 130.

[4] Henry de Knyghton, pp. 2360, 2361.

[5] Ailredus Abbas Rievallis, p. 405. Stephen Birchington, Anglia Sacra, I. 6.

[6] Dr. Milman (History of Latin Christianity, III. 323) takes, I think, too favourable a view of this operation, as well as of the part which Lanfranc played in it. He gives the scheming Lombard credit for sincerity, when he affected reluctance to quit his monastery to become primate of England. "Lanfranc resisted, not only from monastic aversion to *state* and *secular pursuits*, but from unwillingness to rule a barbarous people, of whose language he was ignorant." I am more uncharitable, since it appears to me that grandeur and power were the great objects of Lanfranc's existence. It may be added that the barbarism of the Normans appears from the events of the archbishop's own life to have been far greater than could have been found in England.

his master, made the discovery that the bishop of Bayeux and earl of Kent had seized on certain lands and usurped certain rights appertaining to the church of Canterbury. Having investigated the whole matter, and rendered himself master of the particulars, the primate repaired to the king, explained his wrongs and demanded justice. William, never too cordial towards his half-brother, whose avarice and ambition interfered with his own, readily complied with Lanfranc's wishes, and granted permission for the convening of a great assembly of the lords spiritual and temporal, on Pennenden Heath,[1] to hear and determine the quarrel of the rival claimants to a long array of rich manors. Geoffry, bishop of Coutances, one of the richest and most powerful men in England, was appointed to preside over the meeting, as the king's representative, and all persons deeply versed in the ancient laws and customs of England were invited to be present to assist the judgment of the sacerdotal viceroy. Among the prelates and nobles who came thither at the king's command, was Egelric, bishop of Chichester, renowned for his learning, ecclesiastical and civil, who, on account of his very great age, was conveyed to the heath, at William's desire, in a chariot drawn by four horses.[2] Odo[3] himself, the proud and impetuous son of Arlette, rode to Pennenden surrounded by an army of retainers, as did likewise the bishop of Rochester, the lords Richard de Tunbridge, Hugh de Montfort, William D'Arc, Viscount Haimon with many other of the king's barons. All these grandees, mounted on chargers superbly caparisoned, fol-

[1] Eadmeri Hist. Nov., p. 9.

[2] Palgrave, English Commonwealth, I. 254.

[3] Dr. Milman (History of Latin Christianity, III. 324), treats this proud and cruel prelate with much too great lenity. "The uterine brother of the king, Odo the Magnificent and able bishop of Bayeux, his counsellor in peace, ever by his side in war, though he neither wore arms nor engaged in battle." At Hastings, however, we find this bishop donning a hauberk over his albe, and flourishing a heavy mace at the English soldiers. Taylor's Master Wace, p. 199.

lowed by their squires and men-at-arms, the archbishop's retainers, the lord-abbots with their monks, and the dignified clergy, from far and near, made up a vast assembly, which imparted to the great heath of Pennenden the aspect of an immense camp.

When the lord bishop of Coutances had taken his seat, Lanfranc, the primate of England, appeared before him, and, in the name of the church of Canterbury, pleaded his own cause, in opposition to those who maintained the king's rights identified on the present occasion with those of the earl of Kent. No record of the pleadings has been preserved. It is merely stated that the contest was carried on with great fierceness and tenacity, so that a first, a second, and a third day was consumed before the judge deemed himself in a condition to pronounce judgment. The sacerdotal viceroy then decided, that the estates and manors which had been taken by Odo from the domains of the church of Canterbury should be restored,[1] together with all dues, immunities, and privileges, and that the archbishop should thenceforward exercise absolute jurisdiction within his own territories, save in three cases, in which the fines levied and the right of punishment should belong to the king. These were, first, when anyone of the bishop's people dug a pit in the king's high-road, so as to obstruct wayfarers from city to city; second, when anyone cut down a tree and cast it across the road; third, when murder was committed, or blood spilt, or any other heinous offence perpetrated on the highway.

Among the archbishop's privileges were two deserving of notice, first, when blood was shed in any part of the country, even on the king's lands, from the cessation of the chanting of Hallelujah to the eighth day after Easter, the whole fine belonged to the archbishop; second, when any one during Lent was guilty of *child-*

[1] To Lanfranc's success, Radulph de Diceto alludes briefly, p. 490.

wite,[1] or bastardy, he claimed the whole, or at least half, of the fine; if the offence were committed in that portion of the year which preceded Lent, the whole went into his treasury; if after Lent, the half only.[2]

[1] Compare Spelman, Glossary, article *Wita*, p. 572. Dooms of Ina, art. 27. Leges Regis Henrici Primi, cap. 78. By these laws the father of a bastard child who concealed its birth, was punished by the loss of the wēr, in case it were slain. Halliwell, in his Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, explains *childwite* as follows: "A fine paid to the Saxon lord when his bondwoman was unlawfully got with child; and now within the manor of Writtle (Essex), every reputed father of a base child pays to the lord, for a fine, 3*s*. 4*d*., which custom is there still called *childwit*."

[2] Historiola, M.S. quoted by Selden in his notes on Eadmer, pp. 197-199.

CHAPTER XXI.

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN WARS.

MEANWHILE very striking changes were taking place in the manners and bearing of the people. It would have been too much to expect that differences of race, which after all were not very great, since both Saxons and Normans had sprung originally from the same stock, should have preserved a line of eternal separation between the victors and the vanquished. Wealth and power exercised their natural influence and brought about intermarriages between English and Normans, so that the two nations began gradually to blend together. The manners and dress of the ruling people were, moreover, speedily imitated by the subjugated, who thus hoped, perhaps, to conceal in part at least the most obvious indications of the Conquest. French merchants and pedlars, with French articles of dress and ornaments, appeared in the fairs and markets, and the Saxons, laying aside their national costume, adopted the garb of the strangers.[1] From this far back epoch must we date, therefore, the weakness of our countrymen and countrywomen, which has habitually induced them to concede to France the place of arbiter in dress. William, on the other hand, sought to introduce among his courtiers a taste for the magnificent attire of the English nobles, which, on his first return to Rouen,

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 7. William of Malmesbury, III.

excited so much admiration in the French and Normans. But this attempt seems to have been attended with no permanent results. Equally vain was his endeavour to render himself master of the language of his subjects, which his age, his incessant occupations, and that inflexibility of organs for which his countrymen have always been remarkable rendered impracticable. His attention was besides soon called away to the more congenial task of destruction.

People accustomed to liberty are with difficulty under any circumstances reconciled to its loss. Thousands of English, impatient of the Norman yoke, yet incapable of shaking it off, took shelter in the Isle of Ely,[1] in the heart of the fens, where they constructed what was called the Camp of Refuge.[2] On all sides sluggish rivers, with broad, coarse and splashy banks, inclosed the isle, which they sometimes laid almost completely under water. The soil, soft and spongy, long retained the impression made on it by the foot, and when walked over trembled to a considerable distance like the surface of a quaking bog. Here and there, it degenerated into a swamp, interspersed with broad sheets of water and considerable lakes. No trees were to be seen, save beds of rank willows which shot up to a great height, and were divided from each other by extensive fields of reeds.[3]

Into this asylum the insurgents and malcontents gradually withdrew. Much obscurity hangs over this episode of our history. Many nobles, prelates, and gentlemen of distinction betook themselves at different periods to the fortifications in the fens, as archbishop Stigand, the earls Morcar and Waltheof, Siward, surnamed Barn, Egelwin, bishop of Durham,[4] Egelric, bishop

[1] Historia Eliensis, Anglia Sacra, I. 609.

[2] Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1071. Historia Ingulphi, I. 71.

[3] Camden Britannia, pp. 405-409.

[4] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1071. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1072.

of Lindisfarne—but no clear light has ever been thrown either on the policy by which they were actuated or on the nature and magnitude of the objects they aimed at.

In seasons of great difficulty and danger, genius and courage assert their superiority over rank. Instead of conferring the chief command in the camp upon any of the great earls, the insurgents placed at their head Hereward, son of Leofric, lord of Brun.[1] Mixed up with the real history of this chief we find much that wears the appearance of poetical fiction. The English loved him for the brave stand he made against the foreign invaders, and the poets of the time sought to perpetuate in songs and ballads the memory of his exploits, over which, to soothe the feelings of their oppressed countrymen, they cast the brilliant colours of the imagination.

The youthful career of Hereward had been full of vicissitude and adventure. Confiding in his gigantic stature and almost supernatural strength, he had subdued the pretensions and provoked the anger of all the nobles and chiefs in his neighbourhood. The civil contests of those ages resembled warfare, and men introduced into their sports and pastimes the feelings of the battle-field. Wherever the youths of Mercia or East Anglia assembled to indulge in the amusement of wrestling, or any other manly sport, Hereward was sure to be in the midst of them, resolved to carry off the prize by strength or violence, for when his sinews failed him he took to the sword, and thus wrested from his companions what they would not willingly concede to him. In no part of England did the rough fierce manners of the North survive in greater vigour than in East Anglia. Parents, we are told, for the purpose of testing the strength of their children, used to fling them on the sloping thatched roofs of their dwellings; if, with hands and feet, they were able to maintain their

[1] Historia Ingulphi, I. 71.

position, they judged them worthy to be East Angles, if not, public opinion condemned them to emigrate into the neighbouring counties, where they usually displayed a decided superiority to the natives in activity and energy.[1]

Hereward's hand, through the fierceness of his manners and the intemperance of his disposition, might be said to be against every man, and every man's hand against him. Complaints, therefore, multiplied throughout the neighbourhood, and so perpetually assailed his father, Leofric, a man of small prudence or authority, that he at length applied to king Edward to punish his own son, and procured against him a sentence of outlawry. Thus driven from his country, Hereward took refuge in Northumbria, in Cornwall, in Ireland, and exciting, probably, hostility against himself everywhere, at length repaired to the ancient home of English exiles, Flanders. Hereward's soul was of the true heroic temper. He despised danger and death, and whether his life were long or short, determined, while he lived, to be his own master and yield to no one. No knight-errant ever courted more earnestly the perils of the field. Whereever there was hard fighting there was Hereward; yet, in proportion as he bearded death it retreated from him. His name accordingly became the theme of popular bards and minstrels, and every palace and baronial hall

[1] Thomas of Elmham, Hist. Monast. S. August. Cantuar., p. 140. What follows in this chronicle throws some light on an obscure passage in the Merry Wives of Windsor. Mine host of the Garter, inviting the gentlemen to witness the mystification of Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans, says, "Will you go on, hearts?" But instead of *hearts* most of the commentators are agreed that some other word should be substituted: Warburton proposes *Heris*, an old Scotch word for master; Sir T. Hanmer reads Mynheers; Steevens suggest *heroes*; Malone, who shoots widest of the mark, would have "Will you go and *hear* us." The unintelligible word found in the old additions is *an-heirs*. Warburton, it will be seen by the following extract from the Canterbury Chronicle, divined the proper word: having related the trial of the roof described above, the chronicler says, "Hinc est quod hujusmodi patriæ homines *stout-heris*, quod lingua Germannica *magni domini*, sonat ab alliis terræ incolis nominantur."

in Europe rang with the praises of the Saxon hero. But his life would not have been complete without love. He saw in Flanders a noble maiden, Turfrida, who consented to soothe his exile and share his fortunes.

When Hereward's great reputation reached England, and was celebrated through the streets of Mercia, the anger of his former rivals was converted into admiration. His mother was touched by the glory of her son, and the heart of the old lord of Brun swelled with joy. For reasons which cannot now be discovered, Hereward did not return to England before the Norman invasion, during which his father appears to have died, because, in the confiscations which ensued, his estates were included, and conferred upon the infamous Ivo Taillebois.

Learning in Flanders the calamity that had fallen upon his house, Hereward, accompanied by Turfrida, hastened to England, where he soon collected a formidable band of kinsmen and friends, by whose aid he drove the Norman freebooter from his paternal mansion, avenged the insults which had been offered to his mother, and for a while retained, by force, possession of his patrimony. In times of so much confusion, every man on his own estate was a petty sovereign. If he could surround himself with numerous brave followers, with sharp lances, and ponderous battle-axes, he might gather his fruits, reap his harvests, and hunt his game in comparative security. William for many years failed to put an end to this state of things. The lands he conferred upon his knights they had often to win and keep by their swords. It was thus with Ivo Taillebois, whose lot fell in the fens, near the monastery of Croyland, whose historical abbot has conferred on him an unenviable celebrity.[1]

[1] Ingulph, Chronicle of Croyland, and Peter of Blois, in whose narrative he is described as a flatterer, a traitor, and a sorcerer. Gale, I. 124, 125. In the Athenæum, September 17th, 1861, we find extracted from Nicholson's Annals of Kendal, a brief account of the extinction of this petty despot's family. "The first of them (the Taillebois) came

Hereward seems to have thoroughly comprehended the nature of the position he had taken up, as the leader in a civil war which might assume a formidable character, and extend its operations over a whole kingdom. All ages have their prejudices, and in Hereward's time everything was under their sway: to exercise supreme command over men of noble birth and knightly honours, he must himself be girt in the regular way with the sword of knighthood; he proceeded, therefore, to the great abbey of Medeshamstede, where his uncle Brand was lord abbot, explained the reasons of his coming, and preferred his ambitious request. Brand, whose feelings were all enlisted on the side of his countrymen, willingly complied with his nephew's desires. By his direction, Hereward repaired to the church of the monastery, where he made confession of his sins, and received absolution. According to custom, he then prepared to watch all night in the church, at the foot of the great altar, where he was expected to give himself up entirely to devotion and prayer. But when the doors were closed, when all sounds were hushed, when the tapers glimmered through the darkness in that vast interior, when the painted casements, touched by the night-breeze, rattled gently, we may be sure that Hereward's thoughts reverted to the melancholy condition of his native land. The hours wore away, and in the morning the lord abbot, accompanied by his monks, came to complete the ceremony of Hereward's installation. Mass was then performed, and after the reading of the Gospel, Hereward advanced, and placed

over with the Conqueror, and marrying the sister and heiress of the great Saxon earls, Edwin and Morcar, took his Lucy's inheritance in Lancashire and Westmoreland, and founded the great line whence sprang the barons of Kendal and Lancaster. The male line of this branch of the House of Anjou did not long exist, but the last descendant of the Taillebois died only a few months ago. Mr. Nicholson, quoting 'Ups and Downs in the House of Peers,' states that this relic of a great race was a girl of eighteen, named Emily Taillebois, who died a pauper in Shrewsbury workhouse."

his drawn sword upon the altar, to intimate that it was thenceforward to be used in the service of God and his country. The abbot then took the sword in his hands, and, after blessing it, placed it upon the neck of his nephew, who knelt reverently before him.[1] The mass was then continued, and Hereward, after receiving the sacrament, rose from his knees a lawful knight, qualified to command brave men, and fight the battles of England at their head.

This mode of conferring the honours of knighthood was treated with derision by the Normans, who, in spite of their pretended veneration for the pope, converted religion into a pretext for devastation and plunder, while they mocked at its precepts and despised its ministers. The lord abbot Brand had already, at the first coming of William, given great offence by his patriotism, which led him to apply to Edgar the etheling, not to William, to confirm his election by the monks. He had now, by conferring the honours of knighthood on a chief in open hostility against the king, completed his treason in the eyes of the invader. A military force was therefore sent to tear him from his monastery, and drag him before the king; but ere William's myrmidons arrived, death had released the lord abbot from all secular apprehensions.[2]

In conformity with his settled scheme of policy, William appointed Thorold, a Norman monk, to be abbot of Medeshamstede, and sent him with a strong escort to take possession. But Thorold foresaw in the enterprise no small danger, since the monks, who were nearly all Saxons, professed much reluctance to receive a foreign abbot. Ease and good cheer, however, had rendered the pious brethren altogether unfit for martyrdom, which being suspected by Hereward, he determined to diminish as far as possible the value of their submission to their new lord, and projected a predatory excur-

[1] Selden, Titles of Honour, p. 314.

[2] Chron. Johan. S. Petri de Burgo., p. 47.

sion to the monastery. Intelligence of his design having reached Medeshamstede, Ywar the churchwarden arose by night, and for the purpose of gaining favour with the new abbot, entered the church, and taking thence gospels, mass-robes, cassocks, with other garments, and such ornaments as he could carry away, repaired before day to Thorold at Stamford, whom he apprised of the intended attack of the outlaws. All this he professed to do by order of the monks. Their treachery and servility proved of no avail, for early in the morning they perceived the channel of the Nen filled with ships from Ely, against whose crews, with Hereward at their head, they determined, in the interest of the foreigner, to defend their monastic citadel. To facilitate their operations, the outlaws applied their torches, not only to the monks' dwellings, but to the whole town, and advancing through the fire entered the great abbey by the Bolhithe gate. To the prayers of the monks, which were clearly dictated by terror, they paid no heed, but breaking into the church collected in all haste its gorgeous and costly ornaments. From the figure of Christ they took down the crown of pure gold, and from beneath its feet the footstool of red gold, then climbing up into the steeple brought down the gold and silver table, which had been there hidden. To these they added the shrines and crucifixes of gold and silver, a vast amount of gold and silver in money, the sacred books, and all that blaze of gorgeous vestments in which monks delight. For acting thus they pleaded their allegiance to the monastery, whose opulence they would not suffer to fall into the hands of the Normans, and re-embarking with their plunder, sailed back to the Camp of Refuge.[1]

No sooner had the outlaws departed than Thorold, with his foreign escort, presented himself, and was submissively received by the then houseless monks, since everything but the church had been consumed by the flames.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1070.

It was now about the beginning of June, and the Danes, who had hitherto lingered among the Saxons in Ely, prepared to desert their allies. It has already been seen that these treacherous barbarians had secretly sold themselves to the Conqueror,[1] and now, believing that nothing more was to be gained, seized on whatever lay within their reach, among which was the plunder of Medeshamstede, and set sail for Denmark.[2] Retribution, however, overtook them on the ocean, for their ships, dispersed by a violent storm, were stranded on various coasts. Those which bore the shrines, the crosses, and the golden table, reached Denmark, where, the spoil having been deposited in a church, the edifice was set on fire, through the carelessness and drunkenness of the marauders, and the last relics of Medeshamstede perished in the conflagration.

Ignorant of what had happened, Thorold, with his Norman force, joined the Angevin, Ivo Taillebois, in an expedition against the Isle of Ely, probably in the hope of recovering the wealth of his monastery. Together they marched towards the willow forest, on the edge of which the lord abbot's courage failed; he refused to enter the wood, and remained timidly on its skirts, in company with several Normans of high rank, while Ivo scoured the reeds and willows in search of the enemy. Hereward, who had watched all their movements, now made a rapid détour, and coming suddenly upon the abbot and his party took them prisoners, and conveyed them to the Camp of Refuge, where they were detained till their friends consented to pay for them a ransom of three thousand marks.[3]

The fate of the earls of Mercia and Northumbria was now debated in William's councils. Much danger was

[1] Roger de Hoveden (A.D. 1070) maintains that Osborn, the King's brother only received the bribe from William, for which, on his return to Denmark, he was outlawed by Sweyn.

[2] Historia Monasterii de Abingdon, I. 485.

[3] Petri Blesensis Continuatio Ingulphi Historia, I. 124.

apprehended from their influence over their countrymen, who still cherished for them an affectionate attachment. Both king and courtiers, moreover, looking with an eye of covetousness on their vast domains, scattered throughout the whole north and centre of England, their ruin was resolved upon, and an order issued for their arrest.[1] But even in the royal palace they were not entirely without friends. Having been informed of the king's design, they effected their escape from court,[2] took up arms, and for a while defended themselves in various parts of their provinces. Of the particulars of this contest we are ignorant, though it appears, from the great survey made many years later, that nearly all the estates of these noblemen had been devastated during the struggle, and remained a depopulated wilderness to succeeding reigns.[3]

It might, however, from the very beginning have been foreseen in what way the conflict would terminate; for besides that the king's power had been immensely extended and consolidated, his character as a general and statesman rose greatly superior to theirs; for while he was crafty, cautious, far-seeing, and inflexible in his purposes, the brother earls were vacillating and irresolute, now adopting pacific measures, and now having recourse to arms. Even respecting the policy to be pursued on the present occasion they appear to have taken different views; for while Morcar's inclinations led him to meditate a junction with the patriotic outlaws in the fens, Edwin, after a series of fruitless negociations for succour with the Kymri, resolved to proceed in person to Scotland to solicit aid from Malcolm.[4] The secret of his movements was betrayed, and a body of the enemy followed closely on his track. With the

[1] Florence of Worcester, Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1071; Simeon of Durham, p. 203.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 4. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1071.

[3] Sir Henry Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, I. 319.

[4] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 203.

traitors still in his retinue, consisting only of twenty men-at-arms, he endeavoured by hard riding to distance his pursuers and reach the sea; arriving, however, at a spot where his progress was arrested by a river in which the tide was rising, the little band, with Edwin at their head, turned round and faced the enemy. Their resistance was fierce and protracted; but at length the earl was slain, and his head, having been cut off, was, by those who had betrayed him, carried to William, in the hope of some great reward. The tyrant, now that he had accomplished his purpose, affected to be overwhelmed with grief—it is said he even shed tears—and to obtain credit for sincerity, likewise banished the assassins, but at the same time took care to seize upon the possessions of the two earls, which were so vast that they enabled him to raise the meanest of his Norman followers to affluence.[1]

Among the persons thus enriched, was the leader of the Angevin mercenaries, Ivo Taillebois, to whom Lucia, sister of Edwin and Morcar, had been forcibly given in marriage. His estates, as I have already observed, lay near the abbey of Croyland, whose inmates he incessantly persecuted in a manner highly characteristic of the times. Throughout the whole kingdom the hatred of the invaders for the English was intense.[2] Wherever circumstances afforded the least pretext, they hunted them down like wild beasts, and frequently, when all pretext was wanting, the mere difference of race, supplied, in their estimation, a valid motive. Thus in the fens of Croyland, Ivo let loose the malice and fury of his retainers against the harmless monks, who occupied St. Mary's cell at some distance from the monastery, of which it was a spiritual dependence. The object of this small foundation was to supply religious instruc-

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 7. This chronicler, however, reverses the order of events, representing Edwin as surviving his brother's capture, and perishing in the attempt to effect his release.

[2] Ingulph, Chronicle of Croyland, p. 142, translated by Riley.

tion to the inhabitants of Spalding and other places, situated too far from Croyland to attend divine service at its church.

Ivo, like most of his contemporaries, being frequently at a loss for amusement, adopted means, probably no way peculiar, of killing time: the horses, cattle, and flocks of Saxon proprietors, whether lay or clerical, he looked upon as game, and chased for sport through the bogs and swamps, sometimes driving them to a great distance, and drowning them in the lakes, sometimes cutting off their ears and tails, breaking their legs and backs, or otherwise wounding and mutilating them. The prior and monks of St. Mary's cell became the especial objects of his malignity. As was natural, all the brethren of the opulent monastery of Croyland were much addicted to good cheer, and the little colony near Spalding could not be expected to relinquish their habits by dwelling in the neighbourhood of the earl's castle. They had therefore their droves of fat swine, their oxen and their sheep, their geese and their poultry, together with numerous serfs employed in watching over these articles of monastic luxury. Ivo, who regarded their wealth with envy, seized and impounded their cattle and swine, and, if complaints were made at his court, paid no heed to them; but, on the contrary, after exacting bribes and presents from the prior's serfs, would often permit his retainers to pursue and beat them to death on the road.

It can accordingly excite little surprise that the brethren of Croyland secretly extended their entire sympathy to the nobles, prelates, and other patriots in the fens, whose constantly increasing multitudes at length awakened the vigilance of the Conqueror, and induced him to direct his forces against their stronghold.

No error can be greater than that of trusting exclusively for defence to any kind of material obstacles, fortifications, moats, rivers, morasses, or fens—an enemy, wealthy and determined, will overcome all these—men alone, brave, disciplined, and united, are invincible.

Severus, the Roman emperor, had long before traversed the British morasses, over dykes and bridges constructed by the legions; William had now recourse to the same means, invested Ely by land and water,[1] threw bridges over the narrow streams and lagoons, and began the construction of an immense causeway, three thousand paces in length, which would carry his soldiers across morass and quagmire into the very heart of the Camp of Refuge.[2]

The English, though without the least hope of ultimate success, threw away their lives with patriotic prodigality to supply brilliant and striking incidents to the great Epic of the Conquest. With Hereward at their head, they assailed William's sappers and miners, drove them from the causeway, burned their implements, and slaughtered by hecatombs the troops posted there for their defence. The Angevin, Ivo Taillebois, immersed in the gloomy superstitions of the age, persuaded himself that Hereward must be assisted by some mighty enchanter jealous of the triumphs of the foreigners.[3] He therefore gravely counselled William to oppose art with art, and employ a sorceress to counteract the magic of the English. The mind of Arlette's son was no less clouded by supernatural fears than that of his neighbours, so that he readily gave his consent, and Taillebois' witch, mounted on a lofty wooden tower, was pushed along the causeway to encounter the powers of the air, and cast a spell over the patriots of the marsh. The English on this occasion—would that they had always been so!—were inaccessible to the terrors of superstition, and rushing forward impetuously, set fire to the dry reeds close to the embankment, which spreading and climbing the causeway, soon enveloped tower,

[1] Radulph de Diceto, p. 484.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1071. Bromton, p. 969, likewise speaks of the long causeway, and adds "et domum belli quæ usque hodie perstat, artificiose construxit."

[3] Petri Blesensis Continuatio Ingulphi, I. 124-125.

workmen, sorceress, and all in the flames, and reduced the whole to a heap of ashes.

This threw much discouragement into the hearts of the besiegers, and the conflict might have been greatly protracted but for the baseness of the monks of Ely,[1] who, beginning to entertain apprehensions respecting the supplies for their refectory, determined to sell the last hopes of their country "to gorge their appetite." Sending secretly to William's camp, they offered to point out to the soldiers a narrow winding-path over the bogs, by which the Normans might safely penetrate into the isle, provided assurances were given them that the property and privileges of their monastery would be respected.

William, never niggardly of promises, was now lavish of them to the treacherous monks. At the heels of their cowled conductors the Norman soldiers advanced along the intricate pathway, and pouring in overwhelming numbers into the island, stormed the Camp of Refuge, cut to pieces more than a thousand of its defenders, and compelled the remainder to surrender at discretion.[2] Among these were earl Morcar, bishop Egilwin, Siward Barn, abbot Egelric, and many others, who were distributed at the pleasure of the Conqueror through the various dungeons of England.[3] Egelwin was confined at Abingdon, where he shortly afterwards died,[4] naturally according to some, though others relate that, overcome by grief, he refused all food, and perished of starvation.[5] Egelric died in his prison at Westminster, but the Northumbrian earl, with a strange tenacity of life, survived the Conqueror himself, by whom in his last moments he was liberated from confinement. Rufus, however, frustrated the dying tyrant's mercy, and threw

[1] Stow's Annals, p. 114.
[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1071.
[3] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 7.
[4] Historia Monasterii de Abingdon, I. 48, 493.
[5] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 969. In the Anglia Sacra, I. 703, the tradition is alluded to, that he was condemned to death by starvation.

Morcar again into a dungeon, where he wore out the remainder of his days.[1]

The Conqueror's ferocity blazed forth in all its virulence against the common mass of prisoners taken in Ely. To gratify the vindictive fury with which he now regarded the whole English race, and, at the same time, to impress upon the public mind a terrible idea of the danger to be encountered by taking up arms against him, he tore out the eyes of some,[2] cut off the hands or one foot of others, inflicted, on a third class, different forms of mutilation, and in this state sent them forth to roam hither and thither through the country as mementoes at once of his vengeance and of the utter subjugation of the land.

When the Camp of Refuge had been stormed, and its defenders completely overpowered, Hereward, with a small number of followers, effected his escape by bounding over the quaking bogs, and wading through pools and marshes.[3] His career thenceforth becomes chiefly mythical. Fallen races habitually console themselves for the loss of independence, by dwelling fondly on the displays of valour which graced their overthrow, and converting into heroes the patriots who held out longest against the conquerors; and nowhere do we find this feeling more powerfully developed than among the English of the eleventh century, who bore the foreign yoke with that fierce impatience which foreshadowed the deliverance which, though slow to come, came at length, and enabled them to trample under foot Norman and Fleming, Frisian and Frenchman, rule over their own land with their own language, which they have converted into the dialect of empire over half the world.

[1] Florence of Worcester, Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1087.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1071. On a future occasion William indulged at Winchester the same fierce appetite for cruelty against captives of a nobler order. Some of those, says Hoveden, who had uplifted their neck against him, he banished from England, and others he mangled by putting out their eyes or cutting off their hands, A.D. 1074.

[3] Radulph de Diceto, p. 484. Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 203.

We ought not, through reverence for historic truth, to reject all the legends that obtained currency among our forefathers, under which, though disguised perhaps and mutilated, truth may often lie concealed. Doubtless, two contradictory versions of the same story cannot be accepted. We are unable, for example, to believe, with the abbot of Croyland, that Hereward, peaceably in his bed, was gathered to his fathers, and, with the popular ballads, that, fighting strenuously to the last, he fell beneath the treacherous weapons of the Normans. Traditions, long current, which burned themselves, so to speak, into the national memory, maintain that when the hero of the fens escaped from Ely, he forced his way through reeds and rushes, and over the most dangerous portions of the marsh, to the banks of a river in Lincolnshire, where he found a small body of Saxon fishermen, habitually employed in carrying what they caught to dispose of at a Norman station in the neighbourhood. But though compelled to labour for the enemy, their hearts still clung to their national chief. Eagerly, therefore, did they enter into his design to ensnare and destroy their foreign customers. Hereward and his companions sprang into the boats, and, lying down, were covered with heaps of straw. The fishermen then pushed forward to their point of destination, where they found the Normans seated under tents, waiting for the arrival of their favourite delicacy. While the bargaining went on, out sprang Hereward and his friends, battleaxe in hand, and having cut to pieces a number of the enemy, put the rest to flight, after which, mounting the horses of the Normans, which stood there ready saddled, they gaily rode away.

Exploits of a similar character were performed in various other parts in the neighbourhood of the fens, Hereward[1] being determined to avenge, as far as possible, the slaughter of his friends and the ruin of his country.

[1] Geoffrey Gaimar, Chron. Anglo-Norman, I. 19.

Indeed, the struggle assumed at length the character of a war of extermination. Every pretext was eagerly seized upon by the Normans for decimating the English, while the latter almost invariably fell upon the free-booters and assasinated them wherever an opportunity offered. The dead bodies of Normans were constantly found in out-of-the-way places, with marks of violence upon them, and many disappeared without leaving behind them any trace of their fate.[1]

Hereward, the most prominent leader in this conflict of races, occasionally found shelter in the house of an opulent Saxon lady, who, as his first wife had become a nun, at Croyland, now directed against the hero stratagems of love, and subdued him. Possessing friends at court, she negociated a reconciliation between the great Saxon chief and the Norman king. Hereward married this lady, settled upon her lands, and passed the remainder of his life in such tranquillity as the memory of his country's fate would suffer him to enjoy. When death at length overtook him, he was buried at Croyland, beside his Flemish wife Turfrida, leaving behind him a daughter, who was still living when the abbot of Croyland composed his Chronicle. The romance writers, however, scandalised at the idea that so great a hero should ever lose heart, and die peaceably in his bed, invented a different termination for the Hereward Epic. They fable, that having thrown off his armour, and laid himself down in the sweet summer weather to sleep under a tree, he was set upon by twenty Norman

[1] A law was in consequence passed, imposing a fine on the whole neighbourhood in which the body of a murdered foreigner should be found. Ancient Laws and Institutions of England, p. 206. Macaulay, History of England, I. 13. Sir William Blackstone observes, that, "according to Bracton, the ancient law of the Goths, condemning the vill, or, if that were too poor, the whole hundred in which a secret murder took place, to a heavy amercement, was introduced into this kingdom by Canute, to prevent his countrymen, the Danes, from being privily murdered by the English; and was afterwards continued by William the Conqueror, for the like security of his own Normans." Commentaries on the Laws of England, IV. 194.

knights, fifteen of whom he slew with a short pike which he happened to have near him. Wounded and bleeding, and supporting himself on one knee, the giant had still sufficient force to dash out, with the boss of his shield, the brains of a Breton knight who ventured too near. At length four lances pierced his heart at once, and the mighty Hereward lay extended in death upon the sod. But this termination, however much in keeping with his glorious life, is palpably inconsistent with the account given by Ingulph, who—as he lived on terms of friendship with the chief, was familiar with his wife and daughter, and probably with his own lips pronounced, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, over his heroic remains—must be allowed to have known better than Geoffrey Gaimar what became of the dreaded patriot of the fens.[1]

Having thus, by cruelty and treachery, subdued his enemies in the centre and north of England, William distributed profusely the lands of the vanquished among his Norman followers, upon whom at the same time he bestowed the loftiest titles. Thus William Fitz-Osborne, on whom he had conferred the Isle of Wight, was raised to the earldom of Hereford, Roger Montgomery was made, as I have already said, earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury, while Gherbod the Fleming obtained the earldom of Chester. Along the Welsh marches a line of fortifications extended, each castle being erected opposite one of those gorges of the mountains through which, at irregular periods, the unconquered Kymri poured forth to devastate the plains. By the commanders of these fortresses an incessant border warfare was maintained, with alternate success and defeat; sometimes, aided by internal treachery, the Norman lords penetrated almost into the heart of Wales; sometimes, when union imparted strength to the aboriginal chiefs, they drove back the invaders, and pursued them with sword and fire to the very moats of their castles.

[1] Historia Ingulphi, I. 68.

The fortunes of one of these border earls may serve to show how little William regarded his foreign instruments. When Gherbod the Fleming quitted his native country, at the invitation of the Bastard, he left the management of his hereditary domains in the hands of some of his friends. These at length, when he had been absent six years, urged upon him the necessity of revisiting Flanders, and having obtained the king's consent, he complied with their wishes. But the times were turbulent; every province in Europe bubbled over with petty wars; and there was no man of rank who did not possess, as the necessary concomitant of his power, a multitude of merciless enemies. The earl of Chester had not been long absent from England before he was made captive by his foes and thrown into prison; upon which William, instead of exerting his influence to obtain Gherbod's release, bestowed the earldom and county of Chester on his own nephew, Hugh d'Avranches,[1] who, in conjunction with Robert of Rhuddlan, Robert of Malpas, and other ruthless adventurers, was engaged in perpetual conflicts with the Welsh.

Hugh was a singular compound of sensuality and ferocity, so that he was celebrated at once for his gluttony and his military prowess, his passion for women and the chase. The whole neighbourhood swarmed with his bastard children, but by his wife Ermentrude he had only one son, Richard, who succeeded him in the earldom. His offspring, though numerous, were shortlived: Richard perished by shipwreck, and Hugh's illegitimate children, male and female, were all swept off by accident or misfortune. No calamities, however, arrested the course of his pleasures, or checked his martial propensities. In his own earldom he exercised all but regal authority, holding it as freely by the sword as William himself held England by the crown.[2] For the support

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 7. Dugdale, Baronage of England, I. 32. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2376, who relates that this Hugh lived till A.D. 1100.

[2] Dugdale, Baronage, I. 32.

of his power, he kept up, in addition to numerous retainers, a large army of mercenaries, in whose company he devoted the intervals between his marauding expeditions to eating, hunting and hawking, and bestowed all his favours on those who joined him in this threefold course of delight. Like the early Saxon chiefs, he treated the cultivators of the soil with contempt, and extended little more courtesy or respect to the monks and clergy.[1]

Another of these border chiefs was Roger de Montgomery, likewise a member of William's family,[2] the capital of whose earldom, Shrewsbury, a city built on a beautiful hill overlooking the Severn,[3] was one of the most renowned places on the marches. In the train of this earl came over from Normandy three priests, one of whom, Ordericus, was the father, probably by a British wife, of the ablest historian of William's reign, Ordericus Vitalis, born at Shrewsbury, who was proud to call himself an Englishman, and took peculiar delight in celebrating the achievements of his countrymen. As a monk, however, living under regular discipline in a Norman monastery, he often thought it necessary to strain his historical conscience, so as to bestow upon the Conqueror praises which he knew to be unmerited, and upon Harold censure entirely hostile to his sense of justice.

Montgomery's character contrasted favourably with that of Hugh d'Avranches. Instead of surrounding himself with profligates of either sex, he took pleasure in the society of men of letters, and soldiers distinguished equally for their prudence and their bravery.[4]

Towards the end of August, A.D. 1072, William, who still felt that the crown sat unsteadily on his brow, since the etheling Edgar held his court of exiles in Scotland, under the protection of Malcolm, advanced northwards at the head of a strong force of cavalry, while a

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 7.
[2] Dugdale, Baronage of England, I. 26.
[3] Camden, Britannia, p. 446.
[4] Orderic. Vital., IV. 7.

large fleet sailing up the eastern coast kept pace with the movements of the army.[1] Having crossed the Forth and entered Scotland, he marched to Abernethy on the Tay, encountering no resistance; the exiles had fled from Malcolm's court, probably to the fastnesses of the mountains, and the Scottish king himself, unable to oppose the invader in arms, came to him in a submissive manner, did him homage for his kingdom, and gave into his hands many hostages for his fidelity, after which William returned into England.[2]

The policy he had pursued from the outset aimed, as we have already seen, at ejecting the native English from all ecclesiastical as well as civil offices, rendering it evident that the government regarded the church merely in the light of a political engine. Saxon bishops were driven from their sees, Saxon priests from their livings, Saxon monks from their monasteries, nay, the hostility of William, travelling backwards for centuries, assailed even the saints of the conquered people, and, declaring them to be no saints at all, caused their names to be erased from the calendar. This act of futile vengeance was chiefly effected through the ready servility of Lanfranc, the Lombard adventurer, whose ambition having been baulked in the world, threw itself into the church as a sure ladder to opulence and power. Upon the murder of Egelwin by starvation, William nominated Vaulcher, a Lorrainese priest, to the see of Durham. His consecration took place at Winchester, where Editha, the Confessor's widow, being present, and observing his lofty stature, florid complexion, and milk-white

[1] Annales Waverlienses, II. 131, Walter de Hemingford, c. vi. Simeon de Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 203. Saxon Chronicle; Florence of Worcester; Roger de Hoveden; Roger of Wendover; Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1072.

[2] Carte, I. 425, and Henry, V. 23, amuse themselves with imagining something like an equality between the forces of the two kings, which they tell us lay facing each other during several days, both afraid to begin the combat. The authorities to which they refer—Hemingford and the Waverley Annals—afford, however, no support to their patriotic fancy, disclosing nothing but what I have related in the text.

hair, exclaimed, "We have here a noble martyr!"[1] The hatred of the Northumbrians for foreign prelates being well known, Vaulcher was accompanied by a strong body of troops to York, where he was placed under the protection of earl Cospatric, who, though an Englishman, had been suffered, for an immense sum of money, to retain for a while the earldom of Northumbria. He conducted the foreign priest to Durham, which, though seated on a hill, and well fortified, did not, in the eyes of Vaulcher, appear sufficiently secure. Now, therefore, meeting William on his return from Scotland, the trembling prelate besought him to provide still farther for his safety, and, in compliance with his request, a castle was built on the highest of the hills[2] in Durham, into which the shepherd might retreat from his flock, should they evince a disposition to be unruly.

During his stay at Durham, the king resolved still farther to outrage the feelings of the Northumbrians by breaking open the sepulchre of Cuthbert,[3] their favourite saint. Always prone to cruelty, he declared that, if, upon opening the saint's tomb, his bones should not be found, all the elders of the church of Durham should be put to death. The weather was very cold, and people experienced some difficulty in defending themselves against the severity of the season; but no sooner had the king issued orders for the desecration of the sepulchre, than a violent heat burst out over his whole body—in fact, the fever of superstition was upon him—and he, therefore, in terror, countermanded the order, and left the bones of Cuthbert to rest in peace. Diverted from his sacred, he determined to satiate his civil, vengeance, and, accusing earl Cospatric of offences which had preceded his purchase of the earldom, deposed

[1] William of Malmesbury, III. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 969. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2347.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 1072.

[3] Simeon Hist. Eccles. Dunelmen. p. 42, 43. Bromton, p. 972. Walter Hemingford, c. VI.

him from his dignity, which he conferred on Waltheof, son of Siward, to whom, indeed, the earldom belonged of right. Cospatric retired into Scotland, where his descendants were, during many ages, distinguished for honours and opulence.[1]

Having thoroughly crushed England into submission, William now, A.D. 1073, crossed the sea with a powerful army to carry havoc and devastation into Maine.[2] This province, lying between Anjou and Normandy, had, before the invasion of England, taken William's yoke upon it, chiefly through hatred for the Angevin princes. The experiment, however, proved far from agreeable. The descendant of the viking Rollo had a heavy hand, and he laid its full weight on all who recognised his authority. The Manceaux, therefore, rose in arms against his lieutenants, Turgis de Tracy and Guillaume de la Ferté, who surrendered the citadel of Mans, and evacuated the country. Several of the Normans, however, were slain or taken prisoners during their retreat, and the captives, being thrown into prison, expiated with cruel tortures the ferocity and ambition of their master. Upon the arrival of the king, with a formidable army of English and Normans, terror pervaded the whole of Maine; castles, towns, and cities surrendered at his approach, through dread of his vindictive cruelty, and thus that peace which fear creates was re-established. Soon afterwards a pretext was afforded him for entering Anjou itself. Fierce rivalry existed between Jean de la Flèche and Fulk count of Anjou, and the former, being the weaker, solicited and obtained aid from the king of England. The count, on the other hand, entered into negociations with the Duke of Bretagne, who sent to his aid a powerful army. The allies crossed

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 204.

[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 205; Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 13; William of Malmesbury, A.D. 1073; Diceto, p. 486. During this expedition the English are said to have destroyed the vineyards and burned the towns in France. Bromton, p. 972; Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1073; Annales Waverleienses II. 131.

the Loire, and, to cut off all chance of retreat, burned their boats, that they might fight with the courage of despair. At the head of sixty thousand men, William entered the province, and a sanguinary contest was on the eve of commencing, when a Roman cardinal, accompanied by several monks, went to the leaders of both armies, now drawn up face to face, and in the name of God forbade them to join in battle. Their pious efforts being warmly seconded by several soldiers of distinguished valour, William, lord of Evreux, and Roger de Montgomery, a peace was concluded, count Fulk ceding the province of Maine in perpetuity to William's son Robert, who, however, did homage for it to the count as his suzerain. This treaty was concluded at a place called Blanche Bruyère, or White Fern.[1]

At this time the etheling Edgar, in utter despair of recovering the crown of England, was prevailed on by his brother-in-law, Malcolm, to throw himself upon the mercy of the conqueror. He therefore, with a small number of followers, quitted Scotland, and, his intentions being known, was escorted through the whole length of England with much honour and ceremony by the Norman authorities. Passing the sea, and reaching William's court at Rouen,[2] he was well received by his victorious rival,[3] who, perceiving the feebleness of his character, became convinced that he had nothing to fear from his machinations. Granting him, therefore, a liberal pension, and conceding to him the privilege of hunting in the royal forests, he allowed this last descendant of the house of Cerdic, to wear away eleven years of his inglorious life under his protection. On one occasion, it is said, the weakness and frivolity of the etheling induced him to barter away a whole day's allowance for one of the king's favourite horses.[4] The chase thence-

[1] Ord. Vit., IV. 13.
[2] Annales Waverleienses, II. 131.
[3] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2350; Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1073; Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 205.
[4] William of Malmesbury, III.

forward became the ruling passion of this weak young man, whom, in default of a better, the great national council of England had deemed worthy to succeed the dauntless son of Godwin. At the time of the great survey, A.D. 1086, he held seven hides of land in Hertfordshire as tenant in capite. He was, however, restless and unstable, now preferring Normandy to England, and now England to Normandy. In A.D. 1086, he, with William's permission, went over sea, accompanied by two hundred soldiers, to visit the Norman settlements in Apulia,[1] and, after the king's death, is said to have gone on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in company with Robert the son of one Godwin, who was slain there. On his way home, the emperor of Constantinople sought, by gifts and promises, to retain the unfortunate prince near his person, but a blind attachment to his native land made him reject this brilliant offer, and he returned once more to England, where, in obscurity and neglect, he lived to a great old age, and at length travelled into Scotland for the purpose, apparently, of mingling his ashes with those of his sister, about A.D. 1120.[2]

In all subjugated countries, women have to dread the greatest insults to their modesty, but nowhere, perhaps, in the records of war, do we find a more shameless license accorded to rogues and vagabonds, to inflict irreparable disgrace upon the wives and daughters of the noblest families, than was granted by William to his soldiers in England. By his permission and that of his council, ladies of the highest rank, subjected to the power of grooms, scoundrels, and miscreants,[3] mourned their dishonour in secret, but being deprived of their husbands, sons, and fathers, could look to no

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 213.

[2] Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, I. 409.

[3] Orderic. Vital., IV. 8. In ipsas matronas et virgines ubi eis facultas aspirabat nefanda libidine cœperunt insanire. Eadmeri, Historia Novorum, p. 57.

one for help. All who were able fled to the convents, and to enjoy the protection of religion put on the veil.[1] When the storm had somewhat blown over, they naturally desired to return into the world; but they were now in subjection to Norman priests who coveted their property, and therefore wished to retain them in perpetual seclusion. To decide this matter a solemn assembly was held, over which Lanfranc presided,[2] and gave it as his opinion, that all those English ladies who had merely taken the veil as a protection against dishonour were to be permitted to return to their families, if any survived, but that they who had lost all their friends might remain in the cloister.

While William still lingered in Normandy, an extensive conspiracy was formed against him in England, A.D. 1074.[3] Roger, earl of Hereford, third son of William Fitz-Osborne,[4] had given his sister Emma in marriage to Ralph, earl of Norfolk, contrary to the wishes of the king, who had emphatically forbidden the nuptials. These powerful lords, however, made light of his commands: the union took place, and the marriage-feast[5] was celebrated at Norwich. It seems probable that discontent at William's measures and government had long prevailed among the Norman nobility, who found that, by imposing a master upon England, they had given themselves also a master. The wine drunk at the Norwich banquet did not therefore suggest the conspiracy—it merely induced the conspirators to declare themselves. When the feast was at its height, and the guests warmed with wine, Roger, earl of Hereford, ad-

[1] "Quod nonnullæ prævidentes et suo pudori metuentes monasteria virginum petivere, acceptoque, velo sese inter ipsas à tanta infamia protexere." Id. ibid.

[2] Idem, p. 8.

[3] Orderic. Vital., IV. 14. Bromton, Chronicon, p. 974, places it in A.D. 1075.

[4] Dugdale, Baronage of England, I. 67.

[5] Florence of Worcester says the banquet took place in Cambridgeshire, A.D. 1074. The Saxon Chronicle of the following year, speaking of these nuptials, says:

"There was that bride-ale,
Thesource of man's bale."

dressed them, stating the grounds of their quarrel with William. His speech would have been a long one, had it enumerated all the tyrant's crimes; he merely glanced at the principal, dwelling, at the same time, upon the favourable moment, when William was engaged in quarrels of his own seeking beyond sea; he alluded to the unnatural conflicts with his own children; he showed how, to gratify his vindictiveness, he had disinherited the count of Mortain for a single expression at which he took offence; how he invited Walter, count de Pontoise, and his wife, Biota, to his castle of Falaise, and poisoned them both in one night;[1] how he likewise took off by poison,[2] Conan, the noble duke of Bretagne, who, on account of his virtues and munificence, was deplored with tears throughout the whole land. From such a man, continued the earl, nothing but injustice and perfidy is to be looked for.

Many other topics he dwelt on, in order to induce Waltheof,[3] and the other English nobles present, to join in the enterprise, the object of which was to dethrone William, condemn him to perpetual imprisonment, and divide the kingdom into three equal parts, of which the earls of Hereford, Norfolk and North-

[1] "Count Walter, and Biota his wife, perished together, as the report is, by poison treacherously administered by the contrivance of their enemies." Orderic. Vital., III. 8. Who these enemies were appears from the same author, IV. 14. "Walter, count de Pontoise, nephew of king Edward, and Biota his wife, being his guests at Falaise, were both his victims by poison in one and the same night."

[2] Conan, having accused William of poisoning Alain, his father, provoked his own death. "Mais toi et tes complices," said the duke of Bretagne, by the mouth of his ambassador, "vous avez tué mon père par le poison à Vimeux en Normandie." The ingenious son of Arlette immediately turned this suggestion to account, and, to prevent the duke's threatened interference with his English expedition, had recourse to his usual policy. Purchasing the coöperation of a Breton noble, employed about Conan's person, he caused his hunting horn, his gloves, and bridle reins to be smeared and saturated with poison. Conan, then engaged in the siege of Gauthier, donned the poisoned gloves, and, putting his infected hand to his lips, introduced the venom into his blood, and shortly afterwards died. Guillaume de Jumièges, VII. 33.

[3] Henry de Knyghton, p. 2351.

umbria were to have each one. Waltheof's timidity, disguised under the name of policy, shipwrecked the whole design. He entered into the plot, but entered into it so cautiously, that the other conspirators appear to have expected little from his coöperation; yet they came at length to an understanding, and separated to raise the standard of revolt in various parts of the kingdom at once. The Kymri, ever ready to shed their blood in any quarrel, joined eagerly in this war against the Normans, and organised a strong contingent to act in concert with the insurgent earls. It soon, however, appeared that the popular leaders possessed none of those qualities which would have enabled them to overthrow a military government like that of William; instead of making sure of those who held the keys of their position, they trusted everything to the chance of arms, and while Waltheof marched to raise the North, Ralph de Gaël, earl of Norfolk, encamped, with his Saxon followers in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, and Roger of Hereford marched towards the Severn. They had also taken the precaution to form an alliance with the king of Denmark, who sent his son Canute and earl Hacon, the ready allies of all insurgents in England, but, with a rashness which neutralised their efforts, gave their forces no time to arrive. Roger was thwarted in his attempt to cross the Severn by bishop Wulstan and the vicount of Worcester, popularly called the Norman Bear; the apostate English abbot, Egelwig, by artful misrepresentations, restrained the ardour of the people of Gloucestershire for freedom; so that, instead of joining the insurrection, they placed themselves under the command of Walter de Lacy against the Kymri under the earl of Hereford.

At this time, William being in Normandy, the government was intrusted to the Italian, Lanfranc, who probably did not regret the opportunity of crushing Normans and Saxons alike. Abusing the power of the Church, he launched the sentence of excommunication against the

earl of Hereford, in which he says: "Since thou hast departed from the rule of conduct pursued by thy father, since thou hast renounced the faith which he all his life kept towards his lord, and which caused him to acquire so much wealth—by virtue of my canonical authority, I curse thee, excommunicate thee, and exclude thee from the pale of the Church, and from the communion of the Faithful." [1] Having indulged in this luxury of malediction, he caused the forces of the kingdom to be collected, and, under the command of Odo, bishop of Bayeux, Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, and William de Warrenne,[2] precipitated them against the insurgents. The earl of Norfolk, assailed by superior numbers, was defeated at Fagadon,[3] after which the victors gave full scope to their natural ferocity. Reviving the habit of the old vikings, they mutilated their prisoners, whether Norman, Saxon, or Welsh, by cutting off one of their feet. Ralph de Gaël escaped, and threw himself into Norwich,

[1] Lanfranci Opera.

[2] William de Warrenne, earl of Warrenne, in Normandy, came into England before the battle of Hastings, at which he held a high command. Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 7, supposes him to have married a sister of Gherbod, earl of Chester, whereas his wife, Gundreda, was, in truth, the daughter of William the Conqueror himself. Both husband and wife, pious according to the notions of piety which then prevailed, built and endowed churches as peace-offerings for sin, and in order, at the same time, to transmit their memories to posterity. De Warrenne died A.D. 1088, leaving his estates and honours to his two sons. Gundreda died, May 27, 1085, in child-birth, at Castle Acre, in Norfolk, and the earl, at his decease, expressed a wish to be buried by her side. Their remains were deposited in the church of the Cluniac Monastery of Lewes, whence they would appear to have been removed, in the thirteenth century, and placed in small coffers, which were exhumed in 1845, while making a cutting for the Brighton and Hastings railway. See a curious and interesting paper by Mr. Lower, in the Journal of the Archæological Association, I. 346—357. In the notes to Ordericus Vitalis it is conjectured that Gundreda was the daughter of Matilda, by a former marriage. VIII. 9. But the Conqueror, in his charter granting the manor of Walton in Norfolk to the monks of St. Pancras, calls her his own daughter. Sir Henry Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, I. 507. From a scientific examination of the bones of these two personages, it appears that the earl was nearly six feet two inches high, while his countess, equally tall in proportion, measured nearly five feet eight inches in height.

[3] Orderic. Vital., IV. 14.

the castle of which was of so great strength that it appeared capable of indefinite resistance. Here, therefore, he left his vassals under the care of his young wife, and sailed away to Bretagne in the hope of obtaining succour from his kindred. The earl of Hereford was defeated and taken prisoner, Waltheof made no movement in the North, but instead, according to some chroniclers, basely proceeded to betray his associates to the king, who, for the moment appeared to accord him his forgiveness, though merely for the purpose of selecting a better opportunity for the infliction of punishment.[1] The Danish auxiliaries, with two hundred ships, arriving when all was over, sailed away to Flanders, without even attempting a landing.

The vindictive archbishop of Canterbury, a military partisan rather than a priest, wrote William an account of these transactions, in language remarkable for its ferocity. Although the Bastard, in his invasion of England, had obtained aid from Bretagne, he still cherished, in his heart, the ancient grudge between the Normans and Bretons, and eagerly seized upon the pretext now afforded him, not only of spoiling the Bretons in England of the possessions they had won, but of carrying the war into their own country. Pretending to be in pursuit of Ralph de Gaël, he marched into Bretagne, where he laid siege to the town of Dol, but, upon learning that duke Alain and the king of France were advancing against him with their united forces, hastily retreated, and soon afterwards passed over into England, A.D. 1075.[2] Arriving at Christmas, he assembled his council to pass sentence, rather than to try the persons taken prisoners in the late troubles. Ralph de Gaël being beyond his reach, could only be attacked through his estates, which were confiscated; Roger of Hereford, his own relative, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment,[3] which he underwent with a fierce

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1075. Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1074.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1075.

[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1074.

and undaunted spirit. An anecdote is related of him which strikingly illustrates the temper of his mind: "On one occasion, when the faithful were celebrating the feast of Easter, and the king had sent to earl Roger in prison, by the hands of his guards, a box, containing a suit of very valuable robes, the earl caused a large fire to be made, and committed to the flames the royal presents; the surcoat, silken tunic, and mantle of the furs of precious ermine, brought from abroad. The king, hearing of this, exclaimed, in great wrath: 'He is very insolent to put such an affront upon me; but, by God's light, he shall never get out of prison while I live.'"[1]

The Welsh lords and gentlemen who had been present at the fatal bridal of Norwich were the next objects of William's vengeance:[2] some he caused to be sent into exile, others he condemned to have their eyes torn out, while others, again, were hung on a gibbet,[3] to excite terror in their friends and neighbours.

There was still another individual whose ruin and lands William coveted—earl Waltheof, who, after the Norwich bridal, is said to have betrayed the existence of the conspiracy. His destruction, though secretly resolved upon, was deferred, till the other delinquents had been disposed of. Aware of the king's appetite for forfeitures and executions, Waltheof's countess, Judith, with the circumstances of whose life we are but imperfectly acquainted, then became his accuser,[4] and on her testimony he was condemned. But William had had enough of insurrections, and while the traces of civil war were yet red over all the land, was lothe to hazard a new outbreak by the immediate assassination of the Northumbrian earl. He kept him in prison, therefore, during a whole year, partly to lull the people into quiet by false hopes, partly perhaps that he might

[1] Ord. Vit., IV. 14.
[2] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 208. Radulph de Diceto, p. 486.
[3] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1075.
[4] Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 974.

obtain additional proofs of Waltheof's patriotism, which in the eyes of the Normans was guilt. The place of his imprisonment, removed as far as possible from his earldom, was Winchester; but even thither the love of the people pursued him, and it was feared that, whenever his execution should take place, there would be a popular rising. But the orders at length came down, and the officers immediately prepared to obey them. This, however, they did with the utmost caution and secresy.

Early in the morning, while the citizens were still in their beds, the earl was taken from his prison, and conducted by a strong escort to a neighbouring hill. Like most other Saxon nobles, he was remarkable for his lofty stature[1] and personal beauty; but confinement, and the perpetual conflict of hope and fear, had shattered his nervous system. He experienced a strong reluctance to die, and besought the officers in attendance to grant him a sufficient time for prayer. He knelt on the grass, and poured forth his supplications to God. The executioner pressed him to despatch, because it was feared that, if the people of Winchester should obtain intimation of what was going forward, they would attempt a rescue. Waltheof looked around him upon the green earth, illuminated with the first rays of morning, and his unwillingness was increased to close his eyes upon so much beauty for ever. He therefore asked permission to go through the Lord's prayer, which being granted, he proceeded as far as the words, "Lead us not into temptation,"[2] when the impatient executioner, raising his sword, decapitated him at one stroke, the head still muttering as it fell, "but deliver us from evil." According to some authorities, the body, by royal command, was buried in a cross-road outside Winchester,[3] though afterwards disinterred, and

[1] William of Malmesbury, III.
[2] Orderic. Vital., IV. 15.
[3] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1075. Compare Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 208. Radulph de Diceto, p. 482.

borne by the grateful monks to its final resting-place in the abbey of Croyland.[1]

William's niece, Judith, had brought about the destruction of her husband in the hope of being united to another man whom she is said to have loved—but her partiality was disregarded, and William offered her hand to another individual whom he considered more useful—Simon de Senlis, a brave, but deformed and ill-favoured knight, whose appearance displeased the lascivious countess. The Conqueror cared not—the Norman knight obtained the estates, and the perfidious woman was driven into retirement with her two daughters, and died in poverty and neglect in the Isle of Ely.[2]

When William was engaged in making preparations for the invasion of England, he eagerly sought the coöperation of the Roman pontiff, whose authority he was then ready to acknowledge in its plenitude. Hildebrand, at that time only archdeacon, though exercising in that comparatively humble station all but supreme power, induced Pope Alexander II. to prostitute the influence of the tiara in furtherance of his protégé's designs. It was only natural, therefore, when he succeeded to the throne of St. Peter, that he should expect from the king of England an adequate reward for the great services he had rendered him. At the moment, however, of his accession, William was on the Continent, intent on the devastation of Maine, and the time would, consequently, have been ill chosen for asserting the pretensions of the Roman court; it was not till some months after the king's return that Hildebrand, then Gregory VII., despatched to England his legate, Hubert, first to congratulate the Conqueror on his signal devotion to the interests of the Church; second, to complain that the tribute to the Vatican, denominated Peter's pence, had not for some years been paid; third, that, as a Christian

[1] Ingulph, Chronicle of Croyland, A.D. 1075. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2351.

[2] Chronicon, Johannis Bromton, p. 974. Ingulph, Chronicle of Croyland, p. 146.

prince who had acquired his sceptre by ecclesiastical aid, he should do homage for his crown to the sovereign pontiff. At these demands the blood of the descendant of the vikings boiled fiercely. He no longer stood in need of St. Peter's standard; England lay prostrate at his feet; he had just subdued his enemies in France, and was indignant that an ambitious priest should affect superiority over him. He therefore, by the pen of Lanfranc, replied to his former accomplice in the conspiracy against Harold, in a tone of mingled concession and defiance, that the money which, during his three years' absence in Normandy, had been withheld should be immediately forwarded; but that with respect to homage, he would by no means pay it; first, because he had never engaged so to do; and, second, because his predecessors, the kings of England, had at no time done homage for their crown to Hildebrand's predecessors, the bishops of Rome. Still, mindful of his habitual policy, he recalled the affection with which he had regarded former popes, and professed still stronger attachment for Hildebrand himself; but aware that this would be little valued at Rome unless accompanied by gold, he added, that the sums already collected in the country should be intrusted to the care of Hubert, and the remainder forwarded with all convenient speed through the primate's legates.[1]

Hildebrand, who was then meditating the subjugation of all Christendom,[2] by means of the weapons which he found in the spiritual armoury of the Vatican, politicly consented to overlook the king of England's haughty disregard of his authority, in the persuasion that when his system should be once fairly in operation, England would be compelled to bow the neck to Rome, in company with the rest of Europe.

To acquire supreme authority over the human mind, two things only seemed necessary: first, to establish the

[1] Lanfranc, Epist. I. 32, ed. Giles.

[2] Compare Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, IX. 199; X. 300, 304; XII. 266. Milman, History of Latin Christianity, III. 8, 9.

authority of the clergy over public opinion; and, second, to convert them, as a body, into the unreasoning instruments of papal ambition. There is no phenomenon in history more extraordinary than the success of the papacy in darkening and enfeebling the intellect of the Christian world: for virtue, love of country, lofty sentiments of duty, benevolence towards man, piety towards God, it substituted servile submission to the priesthood, obedience to the Church, the belief in vicarious sanctity, the notion that the Almighty was wrong in creating mankind of different sexes, the persuasion that by shaving the head, neglecting the main obligations of life, and abjuring all relationship to society, men became invested with holiness, and that the ranks and orders established by the bishops of Rome possessed collectively and individually the power to absolve from sin, and consequently to throw open to whomsoever they pleased the gates of heaven.

To obtain acceptance for this theory, Hildebrand rightly judged a great reform in clerical life and manners to be imperatively needed. For many ages the ethical practice of the hierarchy and the monastic orders had been gradually sinking from bad to worse. Church preferment had become an article of traffic,[1] while, instead of abstaining, in conformity with their vows from all intercourse with women, the ministers of catholicism, from the highest to the lowest, gave the lie to the doctrines they taught, by marriage in some instances, by the utmost excesses of licentiousness in others.[2] It is one of the hereditary follies of mankind to recognise the possibility of becoming religious by proxy, which has led to the celibacy of the clergy, to the immuring of monks and nuns, to the seclusion of

[1] On the prevalence of simony in Italy, see the proofs collected by Milman, History of Latin Christianity, II. 431, 435; III. 10, 12; and in England, Simeon De Gestis, Regum Anglorum, p. 205; Chronica Gervasii, p. 1430; Capitula et Fragmenta Theodori, p. 312.

[2] See the Pœnitentials of Theodore and Egbert.

hermits, to the austerities of Brahmans. The inmates of abbeys, priories, and convents were looked upon, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, as the religion of the country; and provided they observed the enjoined fasts, and repeated the requisite number of prayers, the rest of mankind might go on comfortably in their sins, the extra sanctity in the former being presumed to make up for the deficiency of it in the latter. But when, by the irregularity of their lives, by their pomp and luxury, by their fighting, hawking, hunting, by their intrigues at court, by their sale and purchase of benefices, by their impudent professions of chastity in the midst of a multitude of wives, concubines, and palaces filled with sons and daughters, by the conversion of convents and monasteries into so many sanctuaries of intrepid immorality, the monks and clergy had created irresistibly in mankind the conviction that they were no better, if they were not worse, than the rest of the world, it became obvious that a great change must be effected before the Church could hope to recover the spiritual empire it had lost.

To accomplish this change was the grand project of Hildebrand, who perceived in the ignorance and superstition of mankind an inexhaustible source of power and opulence to the Church. Like his contemporaries, he was incapable of independent thinking. Dominated by the traditions of the Vatican, adopting the maxims, and reviving the policy of Gregory the Great, he attempted to transform the sovereigns of Christendom into so many papal satraps, by bringing to bear against them the universal fanaticism of the times. The contests in which he engaged upon the Continent belong to the general history of Europe, and have been amply treated of by others; it is only so far as his policy influenced the condition of England that it enters within the pale of my subject. That he failed to arrest the decadence of the papacy, or to introduce any permanent improvement into the manners of the clergy, is a fact not to be gainsaid.

Indeed, it is admitted even by the monastic historians themselves, that his violent attempts at reformation, out of harmony altogether with the tendencies of the age, instead of producing beneficial results, greatly contributed to exasperate the hostility which had long existed between the people and the Church, and went on continually augmenting in force till the final collapse of the papal system in England. The sin of simony, against which the pope made war, proved wholly incurable, as did likewise the clerical hostility to celibacy, which after triumphing over cardinals and councils, and occasioning endless scandals, powerfully aided to bring about the Reformation.

The means by which Hildebrand's innovations tended to destroy the influence of the Church were many and powerful: he taught that sacraments administered by simoniacal priests were not only ineffectual, but involved in deadly sin all who partook of them. Again, to hear mass performed by a man not wholly inaccessible to human love, implicated the congregation in the guilt of the minister. The consequences might have been easily foreseen. As few priests would consent, at the bidding of Rome, to trample under foot all their natural instincts and affections, to renounce the society of their wives, or of those concubines who supplied their places, they necessarily fell under papal censure, which absolved the public from the duty of attending their ministry. Hence the general neglect of all religious services, contempt for the clergy, disbelief in the efficacy of the sacraments, which the people themselves occasionally undertook to administer, employing contemptuously in baptism the wax from their ears, instead of the chrism and holy oil, trampling under foot the bread of the Eucharist when blessed by married priests, and pouring forth the consecrated wine upon the floor.[1]

[1] Radulph de Diceto, p. 486.

To preserve England from becoming a province of Hildebrand's spiritual empire, William and his council opposed their authority to that of Rome, and prohibited, under severe penalties, the introduction into this country of any bull or rescript from the pope without the king's permission.[1] The clergy, moreover, were forbidden to issue sentence of excommunication or ecclesiastical censure against any of his great lords or barons, under pretence that they were guilty of heinous crimes; to recognise any individual as pope until his election had been approved of by the English king; or otherwise to act in any manner implying the subordination of England to papal authority. The Church was thus made subject to the State; yet in spite of this wise proceeding, numerous errors in doctrine and practice speedily crept into the land. A great authority, deeply versed in the history of our institutions, thus sums up the effects of the conquest upon the religion of the country: "The nation at this period seems to have groaned under as absolute a slavery as was in the power of a warlike, an ambitious, and a politic prince to create. The consciences of men were enslaved by four ecclesiastics, devoted to a foreign power, and unconnected with the civil state under which they lived, who now imported from Rome, for the first time, the whole farrago of superstitious novelties which had been engendered by the blindness and corruption of the times between the first mission of Augustine the monk and the Norman conquest: such as transubstantiation, purgatory, communion in one kind, and the worship of saints and images; not forgetting the universal supremacy and dogmatical infallibility of the holy see. The laws too, as well as the prayers, were administered in an unknown tongue."[2]

Long after this period, the foreign bishops and priests appointed to rich sees and livings, by the Norman kings,

[1] Eadmeri Historia Novorum, p. 6.

[2] Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England, IV. 414.

persisted in addressing the unhappy Saxons either in Latin or French, and when their auditors shed tears, probably at being reminded by the jargon they heard of their lost liberty, and the language in which its sentiments were expressed, the vanity of the preachers led them to attribute the effect to their own skilful gestures and eloquence.[1] To illustrate the necessity of the ecclesiastical reforms projected by Hildebrand, the priests and monks who followed the conqueror into England rivalled the Grecian flatterers, who upon the overthrow of Hellenic liberty repaired in droves to Rome. William's court, as well as the houses of all the powerful nobles, was crowded by those priestly sycophants, who cajoled, adulated, and intrigued, sometimes putting on the disguise of sanctity, sometimes generating into buffoons, in order to obtain by their servility bishoprics, abbeys, wardenships, archdeaconries, deaneries, and other offices of power and dignity.[2] One honourable exception has been left on record. Guitmond, a monk of La Croix d'Helton, having been invited by William into England, on account of his great learning and piety, and pressed to accept some high office in the Church, requested time for consideration, and then expressed by letter his reasons for declining the proposed dignity: "After carefully considering all circumstances," he said, "I do not see by what means I can fitly undertake the government of a community whose manners and barbarous language are strange to me; a wretched people, whose fathers and near relations and friends have either fallen by your sword, or have been disinherited by you, driven into exile, imprisoned, or subjected to an unjust and intolerable slavery." . . . "How can that which you have wrung from the people by war and bloodshed be innocently conferred on myself and others, who despise the world, and have voluntarily stripped ourselves of our

[1] Peter of Blois, Continuation of Ingulph's Chronicle, p. 238. Eng. tr.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 8.

own substance for Christ's sake?" . . . "I look upon England as altogether one vast heap of booty, and I am afraid to touch it and its treasures, as if it were a burning fire."

After so frank a declaration of opinion, Guitmond found it necessary to expatriate himself, and proceeding to Rome, was appointed, by Hildebrand, bishop of Aversa in Apulia.[1]

William, the son of Robert the Devil, could expect no love from his English subjects, and very little from his own countrymen, the Normans; but in the natural course of things he might have looked for some respect, if not affection, from his own sons. In this he was justly disappointed. He had pursued towards them a policy which could not fail to set them against each other, and against himself. He had nominated Henry, his youngest son, to succeed him in the realm of England; he had bestowed the dukedom of Normandy on his eldest son, Robert, by a solemn act in which his nobles participated.[2] But Round-legs, or Short-hose,[3] as this prince was contemptuously denominated, saw that his father had little inclination to fulfil his promise,[4] made at two several times, namely before the battle of Hastings, and during a fit of illness, which seized upon him some time after. His courtiers and favourites laboured still further to irritate him against his father, and at length he made a formal demand to be installed in the government of Normandy and Maine, which he affirmed belonged to him of right. William refused to comply with his request, and Robert's ambition became every day more and more importunate. They who knew him describe him as a valiant prince, a good archer, but talkative and prodigal; in person possessing little recommendation, his features being dull

[1] Odericus Vitalis, IV. 8.
[2] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1075.
[3] Radulph de Diceto, p. 505.
[4] William of Malmesbury, III. p. 607, ed. Hardy.

and heavy, and his figure stout and short, though he possessed a loud clear voice, and was a fluent speaker.

One day, while William was preparing for his expedition against Maine, he rested at a castle in the village of Richer, which was called the Eagle, because, while building, an eagle's nest had been found on the spot in an oak tree.[1] There a furious quarrel took place between his sons. Robert, with his friends, was walking to and fro in the court below, while Rufus and Beauclerc amused themselves with playing at dice in a gallery which overlooked it. These two princes at the time were extremely young, Beauclerc being scarcely eleven, and Rufus himself not more than sixteen or seventeen, that is supposing the chroniclers to have preserved the right dates. But the Anglo-Norman historian, by saying that they acted as military men usually do, clearly implies that they were not mere boys. However they made a great clamour, and offensively threw down water on the heads of Robert and his companions.[2] Two of these, Ivo and Aubrey de Grantmesnil, keenly feeling the insult, united to incense Robert against his brothers, observing that, if he tamely submitted to such indignities, he was a lost man. It required no great effort to excite the passions of Short-legs. Followed by a number of his friends he hurried upstairs; Rufus and Henry had retired from the gallery to a banqueting room, where Robert found them in the midst of their friends. Being roused to fury, he rushed forward to chastise them; the noise reached the king, who seems to have been enjoying himself in a neighbouring apartment; he hastened to the spot, and by his authority put an end for the moment to the quarrel of his sons. In doing this, he probably

[1] Ord. Vit., IV. 20.

[2] Carte, in his account of this transaction says, that Robert laughed at the act of his brothers as a mere joke, till he was incensed against them by Ivo and Alberic de Grantmesnil, though for making such a statement he has no authority but his own imagination. History of England, I. 432.

suffered his partiality for the younger princes to appear; at any rate Robert's mind was completely turned against his family, and from this moment nothing but hatred ever existed between him and his father or brothers.

On the following night Robert escaped unobserved from the castle, and with a small retinue, advancing rapidly towards Rouen, endeavoured to seize upon the castle by surprise. It is evident from the chroniclers, that the quarrels of these brothers were not accidental, but the result of contrivance and part of a system. Robert had formed designs, and talked of them to his friends, who suffered his intentions to transpire; for Roger d'Ivry, the king's butler, having been left in charge of Rouen castle, is said to have anticipated the plot, and put the fortifications in order. He immediately sent off messengers to inform the king of his son's attempt. William's indignation knew no bounds—he gave orders for all the malcontents to be seized—some fell into his power, others in dismay fled into foreign countries, while the king, by way of satiating his fury, confiscated their estates. Hugh de Chateauneuf, through hostility to William gave the fugitives shelter in Chateauneuf, Raimalard, Sorel, and other places, whence they might make predatory incursions into Normandy.

William applied the revenues of their towns and lands to the payment of the mercenaries who fought against them.[1] Normandy was now shaken by those commotions which habitually usher in a civil war, some espousing the cause of the son, others that of the father. All the states in the neighbourhood, France, Bretagne, Anjou, and Maine, fluctuated in uncertainty respecting the part they ought to take. William himself, though the foe he pursued was his own son, never hesitated for a moment, but raising an army, and building several castles in the neighbourhood of the hostile towns, prepared to attack his rebellious subjects. An incident

[1] Orderic. Vital., IV. 20.

that occurred at this time may serve to illustrate the spirit in which this unnatural struggle was carried on. Aimer, one of Robert's mercenaries, who possessed a castle on the borders, while engaged in conducting the high steward of France towards his stronghold, was set upon and murdered by four Norman knights, who threw his corpse across a horse as they might have thrown the carcass of a pig, and bringing it in this manner to the king's camp, cast it on the earth before the hut of Count Roger, with whom he had long been at feud. Aimer's son, Goulfier, was so overawed by this act of vengeance, that he became at once the loyal subject of William, and he and his descendants persevered in their loyalty to the English crown for more than fifty years.

Great obscurity envelopes this part of William's history. The sequence of events appears to be as follows. Before the invasion of England, William, in conformity with the practice of the times, called together the barons of Normandy, and in their presence, as well as in that of Philip of France, his suzerain, made Robert his heir in the duchy of Normandy,[1] and caused all the nobles to swear fealty to him. When he invaded England, he left his wife Matilda with the boy Robert as regent of Normandy, though obviously on his own behalf. This, however, gave the youth a taste for power and authority, so that, when he grew up towards man's estate, he desired his father to abdicate the duchy, and allow him to enjoy the sovereignty over it. But William replied to his wife Matilda, who is said to have seconded her son's request, that "he did not mean to take off his clothes till he went to bed." The interview between the father and son was stormy. Robert stubbornly persisted in his demand, William fiercely refused. While the son was in the bitter irritation of mind, caused by his father's refusal, the adventure at Aigle above described took place. To this succeeded the flight into

[1] Ord. Vit., IV. 20, v. 10.

France and the furious border warfare. I can discover no satisfactory evidence of any reconciliation at this time between the father and son.[1] But everything is contradictory. Some historians maintain that he went to Hugh de Chateauneuf in the first instance, and afterwards that he did not, but, instead, to his uncle, Robert the Frisian. He wandered about in Germany, Italy,[2] and France, and ultimately obtained an asylum in the castle of Gerberoi, in which he was besieged by his father. According to certain chroniclers, Philip bestowed on Robert this castle, which is hardly to be credited, since immediately afterwards we find the same Philip uniting with William to besiege it.

Before Gerberoi occurred the adventure in which Robert narrowly escaped becoming a parricide: while the armies were engaging, Robert beheld a stout knight in armour riding across the field, and advanced to encounter him—they set their lances in rest, and rushed towards each other—Robert's spear pierced the horse of his antagonist, who was thrown violently, and as some say wounded, to the ground. Robert alighted hastily to despatch him with his sword, when the old man drew up his vizor, and Robert beheld his father prostrate before him. The son's sword returned to its scabbard, and he is even said to have bestowed his own horse upon his father, who rode away. In other narratives we find no mention of Robert's generosity, William being supplied with a horse by an Englishman in his army named Tookie Wiggodson, who had no sooner performed this act of loyalty than he was struck dead by a dart,[3] while

[1] Thierry assumes it, but without any authority. History of the Conquest of England, p. 116.

[2] William of Malmesbury relates, that the object of his going into Italy was to negociate a marriage with the daughter of the Marquis Bonifacio, by whose aid he hoped to subdue his father into the relinquishment of Normandy. The Italian prince, however, possessing more prudence than Robert, declined the honour of his alliance, upon which he returned, disappointed and indignant, into France. III. p. 454.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1079.

Rufus, who seems generally to have been near his father, retreated with him wounded from the field. But the incident, though touching, in whatever way it terminated, produced no reconciliation; the unnatural war proceeded, and during three whole weeks encounters between knights and their followers took place beneath the walls of Gerberoi.[1]

At length, many of the Norman barons, whose families were divided and brought to ruin by the unnatural discords between father and son, exerted their utmost efforts to bring about a reconciliation. Reiterated rebellions, however, had estranged William's heart from his first-born; he expressed great surprise to his courtiers that they should interest themselves on behalf of a traitor, who had so often disturbed the peace of Normandy by refusing to wait for his inheritance till it should devolve upon him in the course of nature by his father's death. But the barons persisted, and the king, strong as was his will, yielded to their importunities. The prodigal prince once more entered his father's house, but, being equally devoid of principle and of natural affection, very soon discovered reasons for another departure and revolt. His total want of filial piety now so enraged the king that he cursed[2] him as he went, and the superstition of the age referred to this paternal ban those accumulated misfortunes and calamities which afterwards fell without stint upon the undutiful son.

Enough is not known of the internal dissensions of William's family to enable us to estimate exactly the amount of blame which ought to fall on each member. Robert was Matilda's favourite, partly because he was her first-born, but partly also, perhaps, because his incapacity and his wickedness rendered him a greater

[1] Ord. Vit., V. 10. Henry de Knyghton, p. 2351. Bromton, p. 977. Simeon of Durham, p. 210.

[2] William seems to have been addicted to this practice of cursing his son. Compare Orderic. Vital., V. 11; Radulph de Diceto, pp. 487, 567.

object of compassion. Whatever may be the explanation, Matilda's love for Robert occasioned fierce quarrels between her and her husband, and produced one of the most touching expressions of maternal tenderness, anywhere on record. While this prince was wandering about Flanders and Germany, accompanied by many followers, and those too of the least reputable kind, his resources frequently failed him, and he had to beg from princes and nobles the means of supporting his profligate life. On learning his wretched state, Matilda, oppressed with grief, drew largely on the revenues of Normandy in order to relieve his wants, and her presents were often forwarded by one Samson, a Breton. At length, these facts became known to William, who thereupon, with great bitterness, reproached the queen for supplying his enemies with resources and arms, which, she well knew, they would employ against his life. Matilda replied, "Do not wonder, I pray you, my lord, that I have a tender affection for my first-born son. By the power of the Most High, if my Robert were dead, and buried seven feet in the earth, out of the sight of living men, and I could bring him to life at the expense of my own blood, I would freely shed it for him, and I would undergo sufferings greater than can be expected from female weakness. How can you suppose that I can take any delight in the abundance of wealth while I suffer my son to be crushed by the extremity of want and distress? Far from me be such hardness of heart, nor should you, in the fulness of your power, lay such an injunction upon me."[1]

Upon this William is said to have grown white with fury. He gave orders that Samson, the queen's messenger, should be seized, and have his eyes torn out; but some of Matilda's attendants, with a humanity not common in the courts of those ages, warning the Breton

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, V. 10.

of his danger, he fled to the abbey of Evroult, where he placed himself beyond the king's reach by taking the cowl. According to some chroniclers, William's wrath was not restrained by the respect due to the mother of his children; in his transports of rage, he scourged her so severely with a bridle as to cause her death. Considering the character of the man, and the barbarism of the times, the anecdote is not altogether improbable, though it rests on too slender a foundation to be confidently received. Malmesbury's reason, however, for discrediting it would almost seem to imply that he secretly gave it full credence, since he could discover no better ground for scepticism than that the tyrant bestowed upon his queen a magnificent funeral.[1]

The troubles in Normandy, which might have been expected to produce an effect beneficial rather than otherwise upon the state of England, were followed by no such result. The Bastard had left behind him in the conquered kingdom representatives fully equal to himself in rapacity and cruelty; earls, viscounts, prelates, and abbots, who, hating the English because they had injured them, carried out the policy of the conquest with merciless rigour. Among these was Vaulcher, bishop of Durham, who also exercised the authority of a secular earl[2] and governor: he distinguished himself in both capacities, delivering homilies on morality in one breath, and with the next commanding plunder and homicide. This was what the Normans admired, and among them, therefore, Vaulcher the Lorrainer became the type of what a bishop should be. Vaulcher had naturally surrounded himself with creatures from his own country, to whom the plunder of the Northumbrians was at once a profitable and a pleasant pastime. Chief among these were Leobin and Gilbert, whose rapacity and cruelty, it is said, the bishop pardoned in consideration of their activity.

[1] Malmesbury, III. p. 453.

[2] Simeon de Dunelmensi Ecclesia, p. 46.

There was at that time in Durham a noble Saxon, Liwulf[1] by name, who having been stript by the Normans of all his possessions in the south of England, had fled northwards and taken refuge in the church of Durham. Popular superstition, on account of his blameless life and manners, attributed to him a supernatural intercourse with the great St. Cuthbert, who, it was affirmed, appeared to him familiarly, and dictated his decisions.[2] It is reasonable to assume that Liwulf displayed a strong partiality for his oppressed and injured countrymen, and thus rendered himself an object of dislike to the foreign harpies who hovered over the bishop's table, and defiled everything they touched. Vaulcher himself beheld the Saxon with no friendly eye, though an attempt is made by some chroniclers to screen his memory. It appears certain that he lived on terms of great familiarity with Liwulf, frequently took his advice, and invited him to dine at his table. There, on one occasion, Leobin, dean of Durham, the bishop's chaplain, addressed the most opprobrious language to the Saxon, who, thrown off his guard by the priests's insolence, replied with great vehemence.

When the banquet broke up, Liwulf retired to his own mansion, and Leobin to plot his destruction. He first applied to Gilbert, the bishop's kinsman, probably his son, whom he had put in authority over the whole county of Northumberland, and besought him to lend his aid in compassing the Englishman's overthrow. Gilbert, nothing lothe, fell into Leobin's views, and proceeding with a strong force to Liwulf's house, broke in and savagely murdered him and nearly all his family.[3] Vaulcher's authority in Durham was supreme, and therefore it rested entirely with him to free himself from suspicion, by punishing the murderers, or to make himself their accomplice, by con-

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 210. Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1080.

[2] William of Malmesbury, III. 451.

[3] Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1080.

doning their guilt. He chose the latter course, thereby rendering it clear that the crime had been perpetrated by his orders. He had not reckoned, however, upon the consequences of Liwulf's popularity; his noble deportment, his generosity, his piety, and the entire goodness of his life, had endeared him to the Northumbrians, who, upon his assassination, rose in arms, and demanded the punishment of the malefactors, or, in default of this, expressed their determination to treat the bishop himself as an accomplice.

These conditions the bishop accepted, by retiring with the murderers into a church, and thence conveying offers to Liwulf's relatives and friends to pay the price of blood. The Northumbrians scorned these proposals, and demanded the death of the assassins. To save his own life, Vaulcher now drove Gilbert out of the church,[1] and he was instantly slain by Liwulf's avengers. Leobin was next ordered to quit the sanctuary, but he refused, and Vaulcher found himself under the necessity of facing Liwulf's friends in person. Before the portal of the church they stood with drawn swords and spears, unable to look upon which, Vaulcher drew the skirts of his robe over his head, and, throwing himself forwards, was immediately pierced by the weapons of the Northumbrians. The cowardly caitiff, Leobin, trembling at the righteous vengeance of the people, still clung to the church, the walls and roof of which were then set on fire. Leobin continued in the building till the scorching flames be-

[1] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1080. There are many variations in the account of Vaulcher's death. The Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1080, relates that he was slain in the month of May at a gemót, which does not here signify a regular assembly, but a tumultuous meeting or conference, held in front of the church at Gateshead, where, in the midst of their discussions, the Northumbrians shouted, "Schort rêd, god rêd, slea ye the bischop!" Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1075. William of Malmesbury, III. p. 452, relates the story with an evident leaning to Vaulcher, whom he absolves from all participation in the guilt of Liwulf's murder. With Vaulcher a hundred French and Flemings were massacred, from which it may be inferred that these foreigners had been employed in vexing and pillaging the people.

came too fierce to be endured. He then, half burnt, ascended to a lofty part of the edifice, and, casting himself down headlong, was dashed to pieces on the pavement.

When the news of these events reached London, Odo, the sanguinary bishop of Bayeux, son of Arlette and Herlouin, marched, with a powerful army,[1] into the North, to chastise the inhabitants, indiscriminately, for the act of a few individuals. Men who were totally ignorant of the assassination of Vaulcher, who had probably never seen him or his victim, Liwulf, were now torn from their houses, and murdered or mutilated in a shocking manner.[2] Brother to the Bastard by birth, Odo was still more his brother by disposition—what William had spared during his expedition of vengeance, Odo now destroyed—with his resistless myrmidons at his heels, he swept over Northumbria like an iron tempest, devastating, plundering, murdering, and leaving everywhere his track, marked by homesteads destroyed and towns reduced to a blackened heap of ruins. It was through admiration of these achievements that his countrymen bestowed upon him the name of "Tamer of the English."

In the conquered kingdom, Odo undoubtedly held the second place, having now been made earl of Kent and Hereford, and grand justiciary of England. But the ambition of a priest always points towards Rome. Odo dreamed of the papacy, and aware of his desires, certain Italian soothsayers[3] confidently predicted that his head would one day be crowned with the triple mitre. Odo left no step untried to realise this prediction, but exhausted the revenues of England and Normandy in buying over the Roman cardinals and citizens, and in creating for himself a party among the general body of

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 211.

[2] "Dum mortem episcopi ulciscerentur terram pene totum in solitudinem redigerent. Miseros indigenas, qui causa confisi innocentia domi resederent, plerosque ut noxios aut decollaris aut membrorum detruncatione præceperunt debilitari. Simeon de Dunelmensi Ecclesia, p. 48.

[3] Ord. Vit., VII. 8.

the clergy. He purchased a palace at Rome, and, in order to dazzle the inhabitants of the Eternal City, furnished and adorned it with the most lavish magnificence.[1] The wallets of the pilgrims who traversed the Alps were filled with letters and despatches to influential ecclesiastics,[2] and everything appeared to be going on well.

Odo now projected an expedition in person to Rome, and secretly engaged a number of William's bravest knights to accompany him: they were on shipboard, and had actually set sail, when the king, who had received intelligence of their design, came down upon them, took them all prisoners, and conveyed them for trial to the Isle of Wight. Here William assembled his barons, and overlooking the minor offenders, directed his attack exclusively against his brother. He accused him of innumerable offences, of corrupting his knights and men-at-arms, to gratify his ambition, of oppressing England beyond measure, of pillaging churches and abbeys—in short, of every crime which could justify the king's severity against him.[3] He therefore ordered him to be seized, and conveyed as a prisoner to Normandy, but no one would venture to lay his hands upon the formidable churchman, who stood there invested with all the mystic authority of the papacy. Perceiving the hesitation of his barons and knights, William himself advanced, and laid hold of Odo's robes, "I am a clerk," exclaimed Odo, "I am God's minister; none but the pope has a right to judge me." "I do not arrest the clerk," answered William, without relaxing his hold, "I arrest the earl of Kent,[4] and my own justiciary, who has abused the privilege of his office, and thus rendered himself liable to punishment."[5]

[1] Orderic. Vital., *ubi supra*.
[2] William of Malmesbury, III. p. 457.
[3] Historia Monasterii de Abingdon, II. 9.
[4] Odo, in his charters, calls himself earl of Kent, as well as bishop of Bayeux. Historia Monasterii S. Augustini, p. 351.
[5] Orderic. Vital., VII. 8.

The knights who had been won over by Odo were pardoned by the king, but Odo himself was sent over to Normandy and confined in the castle of Rouen, where he remained a prisoner till his brother's death. To obtain the means of accomplishing his prodigious act of simony, Odo had practised every possible art of extorting money from the English people. He possessed a genius wonderfully adapted to the procuring of riches, and was a master of craft and dissimulation. When Odo himself had been imprisoned, William seized upon his partisans, and by threats, if not by torture, compelled them to reveal Odo's hoards, out of which were taken such piles of the precious metal as, according to the chronicler, would have exceeded the belief of succeeding ages. The gold in some cases had been put into sacks, and sunk in rivers for the more complete concealment of it; but these treasures were now fished up, and served to enrich the conqueror.[1] Odo's estates, consisting of four hundred and thirty-nine manors,[2] scattered over the most beautiful parts of England, were at the same time put under sequestration, if not entirely confiscated. The greed and rapacity of this churchman, in which he resembled most of the Norman nobility, stimulated him to seize upon lands and lordships[3] wherever he found it practicable to lay his hands on them, no matter whether they belonged to churches and monasteries or to private persons. He, doubtless, projected from the first the purchase of the papacy,[4] which, as he knew, had often been put up for sale, and knocked down, like a bishopric or a common benefice,[5] to the best bidder; and by thus rendering himself sovereign of the christian world, looked forward to the keen delight of wounding the pride and trampling on the ambition of his brother.

[1] William of Malmesbury, III. p. 457.
[2] Sir Henry Ellis, Introduction to Domesday, I. 226.
[3] Domesday Book, I. 9, b., 176, 216.
[4] Milman, History of Latin Christianity, II. 426.
[5] Id., V. 426.

The mutual hatred of these sons of Arlette is one of the most unquestionable facts in history. That they coöperated against the English is admitted; but to this course they were incited, not by fraternal affection, but by self-interest. William knew that through Odo he could exert a powerful influence over the church, while Odo clearly understood the advantages he should derive by contributing to raise his brother to the throne of England. Their principle was that of brigands, settling by compact, beforehand, the amount of the plunder which each should receive from the fruits of the enterprise in which they were to engage. But their mutual hatred was not on this account the less. Odo probably beheld with disgust the seven hundred and ninety-three manors bestowed on his stupid brother the earl of Mortain, and endured, with fierce impatience, the superior wealth and authority of the king; while William felt it necessary to be always on his guard against Odo's treachery, from which he only then felt himself secure when he held him safe in the dungeons of Rouen castle, whence he was reluctant to liberate him, even at the point of death.

Some have conjectured that Wulfnoth,[1] the brother of Harold, may have passed the years of his captivity in the same fortress; this is uncertain; but the fate of the tyrannical bishop was far more fortunate than that of the innocent hostage, who lived and died within the walls of a fortress.

In the following year, queen Matilda, who had lived much apart from her husband, fell sick and died[2] at Caen, November 2,[3] A.D. 1083, and was buried in the convent

[1] Thierry assumes that Wulfnoth had been in prison fifteen years, but since he had been delivered as a hostage to Edward the Confessor before his father Godwin's death, which happened in 1053, his imprisonment must already have lasted twenty-nine years. History of the Norman Conquest, p. 118.

[2] Matthew of Westminster (A.D. 1083), who quaintly observes, that she was rather old, and died on the 13th April.

[3] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1083.

of the Holy Trinity, which she had herself founded.[1] It has sometimes been imagined that Matilda lived happily with her husband; but this is incredible: she married him almost through compulsion, after her heart had been given to another. William's style of wooing was brutal. Meeting her in the streets of Bruges, he knocked her down, rolled her in the mud, and, leaving her prostrate on the ground, rode away. Her father, Baldwin, considering this only a slight earnest of what was to happen if the savage duke were any longer refused, consented to bestow his daughter on the heir of Robert the Devil, and Matilda became duchess of Normandy, and afterwards queen of England. In that high position she had many griefs to devour, embittered rather than sweetened by the memory of her own offences. The Englishman whom she had loved in her youth, she plundered, imprisoned, and left to die in captivity, and she is reported to have been betrayed by her vindictive jealousy into hamstringing[2] the daughter of a priest who had awakened William's passions.

One of the monuments which this unhappy queen is supposed to have bequeathed to posterity, is the famous Bayeux Tapestry, which, when I saw it several years ago, was left by the authorities in a state of shameful neglect, being abandoned to the custody of an old woman, who unwound it rapidly for my inspection, narrating all the while, in bad French, her version of the history of the conquest of England.[3] This famous monument is a piece of linen, two hundred and fourteen feet long, by twenty-one inches broad, on which is represented, in needlework, the Norman version of the history of the conquest. It consists of fifty-seven compartments, divided from each other by a tree or a piece of

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 9, where the writer observes, that her tomb was nobly adorned with gold and jewels. Taylor's Master Wace, p. 64. Rudborne (Historia Major Wintoniensis, I. 257) states, erroneously, that Matilda was buried in the church of St. Etienne.

[2] William of Malmesbury, III. p. 453.

[3] Journal of a Residence in Normandy, p. 144.

architecture. The figures of princes, knights, men-at-arms, horses, galleys, are wrought upon the linen, with thread and worsted, and, although rude, give a very tolerable notion of the costume, arms, and armour of those times; but with respect to the character and sequence of events, it is of no authority, since we know neither the time in which nor the persons by whom it was wrought. Supposing it to have originated in the industry of queen Matilda and her maids, we must regard it as a chronicle of the gossip which, during the latter part of William's reign, circulated in the palace of Rouen. It is, however, far more likely to have been the work of a company of vain or patriotic nuns, seeking to subdue the tedium of the cloister by celebrating the exploits of their relatives or lovers.

Troubles and calamities thickened about William's latter years,[1] and he was constrained to taste the bitter fruits of his own tyranny.[2] When the wife whom he had wronged and estranged from him was gone, he stood alone upon the earth. No one remained to love him; his brother lay sickening, and plotting vengeance, in a dungeon; his children longed eagerly for his death, that they might come into the inheritance which his guilt had won for them; his knights and barons, his viceroys and lieutenants, fretted and impoverished by his exactions, seemed perpetually on the eve of breaking forth into rebellion; the North once more appeared to be labouring with new and vast armaments, to be precipitated on the shores of England.[3] Thus brought to bay by Nemesis, William inwardly felt that his powers of mischief were on the wane. Hubert, son-in-law to the count of Nevers, led the way in the career of revolt. Retiring into Maine, he shut himself up in his castle of St. Suzanne, situated on the summit of a mass of crags upon the banks of the Erve, on the borders

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 10.
[2] Anglia Sacra, I. 257.
[3] Saxon Chronicle, Roger de Hoveden, A.D. 1085.

of Anjou.[1] It was a fortress of great magnitude and strength, with a detached keep, and a walled tower a thousand feet in circumference. Here the viscount bade defiance to all the forces of Normandy. His chivalrous character and gallant bearing induced many warriors from Gascoigne and Acquitaine to enlist under his banners; numbers of the disaffected in William's dominions fled to him, and, when the king himself entered Maine with a powerful army, he recognised the impractibility of taking or investing St. Suzanne, and contented himself with throwing up an intrenched camp, consisting of two inclosures, with wall and moat, in which he placed a strong force under Alan the Red to watch Hubert's movements. Numerous encounters took place between Hubert's followers and the Normans, generally to the disadvantage of the latter.

An incident which occurred during this contest forcibly illustrates the manners of the times. One day, as the Normans were advancing to attack the count's forces, a beardless youth, concealed in bushes by the wayside, shot an arrow and mortally wounded their leader, Richer de l'Aigle. His followers, in great fury, rode up to seize the youth, and were on the point of cutting his throat, when the dying chief cried out, "Spare him, for the love of God; it is for my sins that I am called thus to die." The assassin was accordingly suffered to depart, and Richer, confessing himself to his companions in arms, almost immediately breathed his last. His corpse was conveyed to a convent founded by his father, Egenulf, who fell at Hastings, and there decently interred by the monks.

Finding they made no progress in the war against Hubert, but were rather in danger of having their own camp stormed, the Norman generals, with William's permission, commenced negociations for peace, and

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 10. The siege of St. Suzanne is referred to in Domesday Book, fol. 158, b, where certain lands are said to have been bestowed on one Robert, then engaged in the contest.

Hubert, though successful and greatly enriched by the struggle, displayed no reluctance to put an end to it. Hostilities, therefore, ceased, and the count, under the protection of a safe conduct, crossed the sea to William, in England, and, obtaining the restoration of all his father's wealth and honours, remained ever after firm in his fidelity.

Canute the second, king of Denmark, influenced, it is said by his father-in-law, Robert the Frisian, earl of Flanders, now projected the invasion of England. Rumour described his fleet as of prodigious magnitude, consisting of no less than a thousand Danish, a hundred Flemish, and sixty Norwegian vessels, manned by the very flower of the North. Alarmed by these tidings, William made commensurate preparations for resistance; strengthened the fortifications of the towns and castles on the eastern coast, laid waste such parts as were undefended, in order that the enemy, if they came, might find no subsistence, sent out all the cruisers at his command to watch and intercept the Danes, and invited over from the Continent an immense multitude of adventurers, both cavalry and infantry, who eagerly flocked to his standard in the hope of pay and plunder.[1] These licentious and turbulent foreigners were recklessly billeted upon the inhabitants of all classes throughout the country, and probably proved more injurious to their morals and property than another invasion of the Danes would have been. But the Danes came not.[2] Why they relinquished the enterprise is a point much debated among the chroniclers, but of which the best explanation is that they feared to encounter their kindred established in England. Ostensibly they had planned their expedition to aid the oppressed Saxons against the Normans, but in all likelihood the great success which had attended William's invasion at first inspired them

[1] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1085; Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 213.

[2] Florence of Worcester, A.D. 1085.

with the belief that it would not be difficult to repeat the process. Upon further consideration, however, they changed their minds. How far William's gold may have exercised an influence on their resolutions is not known, but we may fairly suspect that it had something to do with the circumstances which brought about the strange breaking up of the Danish armada. It is indeed said that he corrupted the bishops and many of the courtiers, who threw constant obstacles in the way of the fleet's departure. But it may be suspected, without much uncharitableness, that Canute himself was not possessed by any extraordinary anxiety to measure his strength against that of the Norman conquerors, who though they had ceased to speak the language of Scandinavia, were still Scandinavians in blood, in courage, and ferocity.

During the greater part of 1085 and 1086 the fleet lay at anchor off the coast of Denmark, while the army was encamped along the shore. The soldiers, who knew nothing of the intrigues going on among the higher clergy and courtiers, demanded to be led at once against the Normans, or dismissed to their homes. They held secret meetings, they discussed the policy of their leaders, they murmured, they conspired,[1] they employed mutinous and threatening language. To reduce them to obedience, Canute had recourse to severity, but instead of allaying the ferment this only increased it, until, at length, the soldiers burst into the church in which he had taken refuge[2] and sacrificed the irresolute king to their fury. The whole of these transactions are dark and intricate, and it would require new and prolonged investigations to render them perfectly intelligible.[3]

Freed from all apprehensions of the Danes, William, accompanied by his two sons Rufus and Beauclerc, passed

[1] Danicarum Rerum Scriptores, III. 351, with the notes of Langebek.

[2] Roger de Hoveden, Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1087. Ordericus gives a different account of this transaction, VII. 11.

[3] Thierry, History of the Norman Conquest, p. 126.

over into Normandy. Between him and Philip, king of France, there existed a strong enmity, which on his falling ill at Rouen was increased by a taunting speech of the French monarch. William, it was known, had crossed the sea for the purpose of invading France, and Philip, attributing his delay at Rouen to weakness, observed insultingly, and alluding to the king's corpulence, "William is lying-in at Rouen, let him know that I will be present at his churching with a hundred thousand candles."[1]

Stung by this coarse jest, the Norman king exclaimed fiercely, "By the splendour of God I will celebrate my churching in the cathedral of Notre Dame, with ten thousand lances for tapers.[2] The dispute between these kings originated in the appropriation by France of a small province called the Vexin,[3] situated between the Epte and Oise. It had for ages belonged to Normandy, but during William's minority the French took possession, and constantly refused to restore it. In this quarrel, therefore, the appearance at least of justice was on William's side, though he above all men should have recognised the principle that might makes right, since it was to this he owed the possession of England.

All negociation was put an end to by the bitterness of the regal jests, and William sprang from his bed to avenge the insult offered to his figure. The great Roman poet builds his epic on the implacable anger of Juno, for the disparagement of her beauty by a Trojan prince, and the war of the Vexin, which within a limited circle was as destructive as any celebrated in verse, traced its flagitious barbarity to the French king's sneer at William's person.

Having collected a formidable army, he crossed the Epte into France in the month of July. All the fields far and near were waving with the ripening corn, whose

[1] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1087.
[2] Bromton, p. 980. Knyghton, p. 2353.
[3] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 14.

golden hues in many places already invited the sickle; innumerable orchards, whose trees were laden with fruit, lay scattered over the country, while the vine clustered about the hills in bacchanal profusion. William's troops trampled down or burned the corn, cut down the fruit-trees, plucked up the vines by the roots, set fire to hamlets and villages, and soon converted a splendid scene of rural beauty into a display of dreary desolation. Numbers of the common people were burnt in their dwellings, and every form of cruelty was indulged in to avenge the French king's jest. At length the Normans presented themselves before the town of Mantes on the Seine, whose inhabitants had stolen forth with heavy hearts to witness the storm of devastation which they saw rapidly drifting towards their own dwellings, and the enemy, coming up suddenly, took them by surprise, and entered the gates of the town pell-mell with the fugitives. Here, in obedience to the royal orders, churches, monasteries, convents were set on fire, nuns and anchorites burnt alive in their cells,[1] and William, mounted on a fiery charger, witnessed the conflagration with strange delight. Burning embers, blown hither and thither by the wind, strewed the streets, filled up the kennels and ditches, and presented everywhere to the eye the appearance of a plain on fire. The king rode to and fro, enjoying the sufferings, the shrieks and screams of the inhabitants. Suddenly, as he plunged along through blood and flames, his horse, treading on the burning fragments of a house, reared and plunged, and at length sent the pommel of the saddle into his bowels, with a shock so violent that it produced an internal rupture.[2]

The Conqueror was tamed at once. He desisted from the prosecution of his design, and, with the fear of immediate death before his eyes, retreated in all haste to

[1] Simeon De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 213. Knyghton, p. 2353.

[2] Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1087. William of Malmesbury, III. p. 460.

Rouen. There he lay for some time hovering between life and death, now striving to extort hope from his sacerdotal physicians, now yielding to the suggestions of despair. The noise and bustle of that commercial city soon induced him to remove to some more quiet spot, where he might make with less disturbance his approaches to the temple of death. The place selected was the priory attached to the church of St. Gervase, situated on a pleasant hill to the west of Rouen. Here it became evident that the King of Terrors had raised his sceptre, and was summoning William to his halls. Now rose up before the tyrant's mind[1] the long array of crimes and infamies by which he had acquired dominion in England, and exercised authority in Normandy, and superstition of the most grovelling kind heightened and multiplied the horrors of his guilty conscience.

The chroniclers have put into his mouth a prolix speech, containing a recapitulation of his biography, bedabbled here and there with large patches of blood. Even in that record, however, he avoids all allusion to the murder of his guests, and to the poisoning of Conan; but he remembers the barbarities, hideous beyond example, which he had perpetrated in Northumbria, the stark corpses strewed in loathsome decomposition along the roads and fields, the countless victims of nine years' famine, reduced to thin shadows by want, the tortures inflicted on the English monks and clergy, wild multitudes of widows and orphans, made such by his cruelty, unhappy bands of exiles, scattered over the whole of the then known world, drooping, fainting, perishing of want, far from their native country. Then he bethought him of the prisons of Normandy, crowded with the nobles of England, the victims of his injustice: the gallant Morcar, allured into his power by fraud; the gentle Wulfnoth, delivered to him by Edward the Confessor's treachery,

[1] Bromton balances, with considerable justice, William's good and bad qualities, p. 981.

in innocent childhood, and held in hopeless captivity throughout life, with numerous others scarcely less injured or oppressed. His own brother, Odo, who deserved far worse than a dungeon, might yet have pleaded to him the caresses of the same mother, and all the soft remembrances of childhood. But to William's sickening soul, there were other crimes which wore, in those ages, a still more awful aspect: the burning of churches, of monasteries, of convents, with the devout recluses, who refused to come forth from their cells even to escape death.

William writhed with remorse and agony, when he called this long array of delinquencies to mind. His penitence naturally took the form prescribed by the public opinion of the times: he sent money to Mantes to rebuild the sacred edifices; he besought and conjured the clergy to stand, with their prayers, between him and the wrath of God; and, in order to purchase their intercession, lavishly distributed the wealth of England among them and the churches. Then, again, when he came to bequeath his dominions, conscience stepped in: to Normandy he thought he had a right, and that, in conformity with the sacred engagement he had entered into before the Conquest, he bestowed on his son Robert, at the same time declaring openly his persuasion of his thorough unworthiness.

On the subject of England, he solemnly gave the lie to the professions of his whole life, confessing that he had not obtained it by inheritance, but by the sword, and the exercise of unspeakable cruelty. He hoped, however,[1] that his second son, William, might obtain the English crown, and, persevering in dissimulation and hypocrisy to the last, dictated a letter to Lanfranc, commanding the delivering up of those treasures which might determine the descent of the sceptre.

Fearing he should be overlooked, the youthful Henry

[1] Simeon, misinformed on this point, says he left the kingdom of England to Rufus. De Gestis Regum Anglorum, p. 213.

now came forward, and inquired of his dying father what he meant to do for him. The king replied, "I leave thee five thousand pounds of silver."[1] "But am I," inquired the pertinacious Henry, "to have no spot of ground allotted me on which I may deposit my treasures?" Anticipating the fate of Robert and Rufus, William replied, "Be patient, my son, and thou wilt inherit thy brothers' territories." Being unable to obtain any more, Henry, with the royal order in his hand, left his dying parent, and rushed off to attend to the weighing of the silver. Rufus, equally impatient, deserted his father's bedside, hurried to the shore, and took ship for England.

William's last moments[2] soon arrived, and he breathed forth his soul in a brief prayer to the Virgin. While he was in his agonies, his courtiers and parasites dropped off one after another to stow away their plunder, and it may even be doubted whether any one was really present at his death. No sooner, however, was the breath out of his body than it was thrown on the ground, stript of its clothes, jewels, ornaments, and left there naked and utterly neglected from morning till afternoon prayers. He had not a soul to love him, man, woman, or child. Nero himself was regarded with more affection, since there were those who, when he was no more, habitually, in spring and summer, strewed flowers upon his tomb.[3]

The monks, always honourably distinguished by their reverence for the dead, and the care with which they performed the rites of sepulture, as soon as they heard news of his decease, formed themselves into a procession, and with crucifixes and censers, according to their best notions of piety, came to lift the corpse from its shameful position

[1] John Capgrave assures us that he left to Herri, cleped clerk, al his tresore (Chronicle of England, p 130); whether acquired, as Bromton observes, justly or unjustly, p. 979.

[2] Historia Monasterii De Abingdon, II. 16, 284.

[3] Non defuerunt qui per longum tempus vernis æstivisque floribus tumulum ejus ornarent. Suetonii Vita Neronis, 57.

on the floor. They then performed, in the church of St. Gervase, the service for the dead. There were, however, expenses to be paid, and of William's family there was no one to pay them. As far as appears, his body might have become a prey to kites and wolves, but for the natural piety of strangers. Herlouin, a country knight, came forward and undertook the charge of the funeral, caused the body to be washed and strewed with spices, which induced the rude chroniclers to say it was embalmed. Herlouin seems to have consulted the archbishop respecting the place of the king's interment, and was advised to carry his remains to Caen, to the church of St. Etienne, which William himself had built. He accordingly procured a hearse to bear them to the banks of the river, whence they were conveyed by water to Caen. Here Gilbert, the lord abbot, with his monks, met the corpse, and forming themselves into a procession, moved slowly towards St. Etienne. But William's body was destined not to advance one step to the tomb in peace. As the hearse was moving along the streets, a great fire burst forth in the town, the flames shooting aloft and spreading with great rapidity, upon which all the clergy and laity deserted the procession, and rushed off to extinguish the conflagration, leaving the monks to perform the royal obsequies as they pleased. Being accustomed to order and discipline, they suffered not themselves to be disturbed by what terrified others, and proceeded to the church, which they entered singing psalms. Here the corpse was left till all the prelates and abbots of Normandy could be brought together to conclude the ceremony. Among these was William's brother, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, who had been liberated in time to behold his enemy consigned to the earth. The spot selected for his grave was between the choir and the altar, where you still behold the slab that covers his ashes, after the lapse of nearly eight hundred years, inscribed with the words, "Invictissimus Gulielmus."[1]

[1] Journal of a Residence in Normandy, p. 34.

When the stone coffin had been lowered into the grave, but while the corpse still remained above ground upon the bier,[1] Gilbert, bishop of Evreux, who seems to have been selected for his superior eloquence, delivered the funeral oration. He dwelt exclusively upon those actions of the deceased which he considered honourable to his memory, celebrating the achievements by which he had enlarged the dominions of the Normans far beyond what was known to their forefathers. The prelate did not even blush to exalt his justice, his preservation of peace, his severities towards thieves and robbers, of whom he was himself the chief, and the protection he extended to innocent persons, above all, to the monks and clergy. This discourse contrasted strangely with William's own confession on his death-bed, in which he enumerated his barbarities and heinous crimes against all ranks and conditions of men.

When the bishop had concluded his panegyric, he addressed himself to the congregation, whom he entreated to pray for the soul of the deceased, and to forgive him if in aught he had offended against them. When he ceased speaking, Ascelin, the son of Arthur, stepped forward and said, with a loud voice:[2] "The ground on which you stand was the yard belonging to my father's house, which that man for whom you pray, when he was yet only duke of Normandy, took forcible possession of, and, in the teeth of all justice, by an exercise of tyrannical power, here founded this abbey. I, therefore, lay claim to this land, and openly demand its restitution, and, in God's name, I forbid the body of the spoiler to be covered with the earth which is my property, or buried in my inheritance."

According to some historians, prince Henry was present at this scene, and paid Ascelin a hundred pounds of silver for the land on which the church stood. Others say,

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 16. Chronicon Johannis Bromton, p. 980. Knyghton, p. 2353.
[2] Orderic. Vital., ubi supra.

the bishops paid him sixty shillings for the grave, and afterwards arranged respecting the remainder of the property. This interruption being over, the body was lowered into the coffin, which was then discovered to be too small, and great force being used to thrust it in, the bowels burst,[1] and ran out into the grave, immediately filling the church with so great a stench that the bystanders were unable to endure it. Incense, therefore, and other aromatics were burnt, and ascended in clouds, but failed to purify the tainted atmosphere. The priests, being inspired with great terror and alarm, hurried through the ceremony, and then hastened to their respective abodes.

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, VII. 16.

CONCLUSION.

THE effects of the Conquest, whatever ingenuity may be exhibited in disguising them, were to check the civilisation of the country, to diminish the value of property, to introduce mischievous usages and customs, and to extirpate, as far as possible, those sentiments of liberty which had begun to be very widely diffused before that disastrous event. No stronger proofs of the beneficial results of institutions can be adduced than their tendency to promote the well-being of the people, which displays itself in application to the useful arts, agriculture, commerce, and all other forms of industry. Wherever this consequence is produced, it is followed by another, which enables us to judge of the extent to which it operates; that is to test its value. One of the most unequivocal symptoms of good government is increase of population, which, unless under very exceptional circumstances, implies the abundance and cheapness of the primary necessaries of life.

Upon the settlement of the Normans in this country, society made a retrograde movement; in most of the towns a large proportion of the houses were to let; many places, once flourishing, fell into decay; immense tracts of land, which under the Saxon kings had been covered with waving corn, well-cultivated gardens, orchards, or vineyards, became waste, while the grinding oppression exercised by the foreigners, produced a profound discouragement in the minds of the people which paralysed their energies, and led among other evil results to the

neglect of marriage. Numbers among the most distinguished of the ancient aristocracy, the females of whose families had been debased and degraded by William's licentious companions, sought to bury their grief and shame in the monasteries, where, in many cases, the noblest blood in England became extinct. Far and wide the marauders spread the taint of their infamous manners through the country, where, being billeted in the houses of gentlemen, ecclesiastics, and yeomen, they exercised all the privileges usually claimed by successful adventurers and mercenaries in a subjugated country. When the women of the kingdom had been thus demoralised, they were not considered very eligible as wives, and the ethics of the nation, which, deteriorated by the Danish inroads, had begun to recover its tone under Edward the Confessor and Harold, again retrograded, and became the butt of scorn and satire to the licentious witlings who crowded the courts of the Norman princes. In consequence of these deleterious influences, the nisus of population was so violently checked, that it took nearly six hundred years to double the number of the inhabitants existing in England at the period of William's invasion. This is an irrefragable argument against the Conquest, considered from a social point of view.

For many years after it took place the castle may be said to have devoured the cottage. Under the Saxon system the whole face of the country was dotted with homesteads. Indeed, so great was the partiality of the English of those days for the enjoyments of a rural life, that it required reiterated efforts of legislation to bring them to the towns even for purposes of trade and business. Under the Norman rule the state of affairs was reversed. The people flocked to the towns, in the hope of thus escaping some of the more galling forms of oppression, while the king and his foreign grandees multiplied their forests, parks, and chases, where they might enjoy the pleasures best suited to their coarse and brutal natures.

One of the results of the passion for hunting in

William, often referred to by the chroniclers, was the formation of the New Forest, which withdrew from agriculture and all kinds of productive industry an expanse of country thirty miles in length. Towns, villages, and hamlets, with their minsters and monasteries, were dispeopled and demolished, in order that the king, when not engaged in the chase of human victims, might satisfy his sanguinary appetite by slaughtering the inferior animals. Here, in the pursuit of this bloody pastime, he sometimes, it is said, spent whole months watching the deer as they glanced between the ruins of Saxon churches, or trod in their rapid flight upon desecrated altars and the graves of the dead. What became of the inhabitants of the towns and villages thus destroyed we are left to conjecture: the men may have been draughted into the conqueror's armies, while the women were driven either to take refuge in convents, or to augment the ranks of that disreputable sisterhood which the achievements of the Normans tended greatly to multiply.

Still William may be said to have made amends for the churches he overthrew in Hampshire by those he elsewhere erected and endowed. His followers, actuated in many instances we cannot doubt by genuine piety, likewise built minsters and founded monasteries, which they enriched with profuse donations in money and lands. Such grants, from time immemorial, had been secured to the possessors by charters, which bore in Saxon times the signatures of the donors, preceded by the sign of the cross. Edward the Confessor introduced the practice of appending seals to these instruments, which became still more completely the fashion in Norman times. In the fabrication and use of these seals, extremely whimsical traits of character were sometimes exhibited: it was customary for kings and nobles, when about to enrich some church or monastery, to clip a few hairs from their heads or beards, and mix them with the wax on which they impressed their seals, as an indubitable sign to posterity of the genuineness of the document. Thus, in one

of their charters to the church of Lewes, the second earl of Warrenne and his brother caused a little of their hair to be cut off with a knife by the bishop and mixed with the wax, a fact to which they allude in the document itself. On other occasions, a still more curious and primitive mode of verification was had recourse to; the noble donor, while the wax was yet warm and soft, put the seal in his mouth and impressed upon it the marks of his teeth. The earl of Lincoln, when bestowing an estate on the monastery of Castelacre, observes in his charter, "I have impressed upon the wax of this seal the marks of my teeth, as my wife Muriel can testify;" and the historian to whom we are indebted for this illustration of Norman manners and enlightenment, relates that the seal was still in existence in the fifteenth century.

When the king's intention to undertake the Domesday survey became known, the monks throughout the kingdom began to tremble for their earthly possessions. Their charters, in many instances, had perished through lapse of time; in others, they had been destroyed by the Danes; while William himself, by his great act of confiscation in A.D. 1070, had robbed numerous monasteries of their title-deeds, that they might lie the more completely at his mercy. Apprehension of the evils which might accrue to them from the inquisition of the Domesday commissioners, incited them to put once more in practice the arts of fraud and forgery by which, from time immemorial, they had been in the habit of enriching themselves and their monasteries. Where no genuine charter existed, they fabricated one for the occasion, and were doubtless sufficiently skilful to impart to it the appearance and odour of remote antiquity.

Upon Domesday Book, in which the fruits of the great survey are preserved, much care and pains have been recently bestowed, though what is really wanted has not been done. To throw all the light it is capable of affording upon the condition of England when it fell into the hands of the vikings, the work, freed from abbreviations

and technical obscurities, should be printed, with the best commentary which the topographical and antiquarian learning of the present day could supply. This would be a labour worthy of a liberal and enlightened government, and more deserving the gratitude of the country than the publication of scores of inferior works. Were this task accomplished, the disastrous consequences of the subjection of the kingdom to foreigners would be rendered so manifest, that the servile admirers of arbitrary power might shrink from repeating the panegyrics with which they have sought to embalm the memory of one of the worst of kings.

The object of the survey was to facilitate the financial operations of the government, by ascertaining the extent and value of estates, and the amount of moveable property throughout the realm. To describe the operations of the commissioners by whom it was compiled, is altogether unnecessary. The result arrived at indisputably establishes the fact, that under the government of the conquest the resources of the country were diminished, the people oppressed and impoverished, the springs of industry relaxed, and the foundation laid of all those disorders and calamities which for ages afflicted the land.

No sufficient data exist for exactly estimating the amount of the population. It does not, however, appear extravagant to assume, that on the day of William's landing it fell little short of two millions, which went on during the next twenty years steadily diminishing, till at his death it probably fell considerably short of this number.

That William was a man of extraordinary abilities, is not to be denied. His career from boyhood upwards, his preparations for the invasion of England, his negociations with the pope, with the petty princes of France, with his father-in-law the count of Flanders, who lent him ships and money on condition of receiving a large pension, his forgeries respecting the will of the Confessor, which thousands believed in, though no one ever saw it—his generalship—his achievements as a statesman—

his profound and subtle diplomacy; each and all entitle him to the reputation of worldly greatness. Nothing could have been more enlarged or far-sighted than the policy by which he overcame and subjected to prolonged thraldom a free and powerful kingdom, whose inhabitants he smote with mental paralysis, so that they cowered like a vast herd of slaves beneath his sceptre. His physical structure and personal appearance corresponded with the character of his mind: he was strong, square, and athletic, with a countenance in which, with regular and handsome features—except the mouth—was blended the expression of so much ferocity, cruelty, and falsehood, that few could regard him, especially during his paroxysms of fury, without terror and apprehension. He was addicted, moreover, beyond most men to the habit of swearing and cursing, and his oaths and imprecations were so appalling from their blasphemous impiety, that they greatly augmented the dread excited by his truculent aspect. Among his vices, next after bloodthirstiness and cruelty, grasping avarice was most prominent. He had recourse to the most odious and disreputable means of extorting and amassing money, appropriated to his own use fourteen hundred manors from the confiscated estates of the English nobles, seized despotically on men's property, then forced them to purchase it back, and, like his brother Odo, addicted himself to indiscriminate extortion and plunder, that he might have always at his command an overflowing treasury wherewith to purchase unscrupulous agents of tyranny, or to subdue by corruption and bribery the enemies whom he felt lothe to encounter in the field. Three times a year, also, he applied the contents of his exchequer to the requisitions of feasting and merriment, at Winchester, Westminster, and Gloucester,[1] when the

[1] Edward the Confessor, who on some occasions substituted Worcester for Gloucester, bestowed at each of these festivals half a mark on the master of the choir, and on the monastery a hundred cakes of white bread and a cask of wine. Mac Cabe, Catholic History of England, III. 432.

chief nobles and authorities of the land thronged his palace, and partook of his banquets. On these occasions he wore his crown at table, and was distinguished for courtesy and affability.

Some authors have sought to enhance his reputation by praising his abstinence from women. The same thing has been said of Ezzelino da Romano, the personification of revolting cruelty. In William's case the praise is unmerited, since, besides the mistress by whom he left at least one son, there was another, the daughter of a priest, his passion for whom betrayed Matilda into the guilt of assassination.

The spirit of his government was precisely what might have been expected from a man of such a character. Throughout the land compassion and horror were excited by multitudes of dreadful objects upon whom the bloody laws of conquest had been exercising their tender mercies. It was impossible to walk the streets of any great city without encountering individuals whose eyes had been torn out, whose feet or hands or both had been lopped off, and who, thus reduced to bare trunks, owed the protraction of their wretched lives to the exercise of a dreadful charity. Other barbarities, too shocking to be mentioned, were likewise of constant occurrence. The least opposition to despotic authority immediately provoked a massacre; every attempt at the recovery of freedom was quenched in blood: executions,[1] halters, axes, gibbets, were the daily means by which the Saxons were sought to be conciliated to their new master. If monks became unruly, they were shot down in the church till their blood ran in streams from beneath the altar.[2] The brave and

[1] Yet in theory the law forbade the execution of criminals, who were, instead, to be converted into so many hideous spectacles for the purpose of exciting terror: "Interdicimus etiam ne quis occidatur vel suspendatur pro aliqua culpa, sed enerventur oculi, et abscindantur pedes, vel testiculi, vel manus, ita quod truncus remaneat vivus, in signum prodicionis et nequitie sue." Carta Regis Willelmi, article 17.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1083.

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noble were exiled for ever from their native land, the tame and submissive were reduced to servitude. It has been sometimes supposed that the slave trade, which had constituted the opprobrium of Saxon times, was prohibited after the conquest, erroneously, since the laws of William permit the sale of men and women within the realm, and only repeat the ancient prohibition to export them beyond sea.[1]

Of William's revenue it is impossible to form any accurate estimate. A contemporary writer makes on this subject the following statement: "The king himself received daily one thousand and sixty pounds, thirty pence and three farthings, sterling money, from his regular revenues in England alone, independently of presents, fines for offences, and many other matters which constantly enrich a royal treasury."[2] Very different conceptions of the value of this sum in our present money have been formed by modern writers, some regarding it as equivalent to twelve[3] millions sterling; others, to fifteen[4] millions; while some even suppose it to have amounted to twenty-three[5] millions a-year. If we compare this imaginary revenue with the population, we shall immediately perceive its absurdity, since, reckoning the inhabitants of England during the Conqueror's reign at two millions, we must assume them to have paid from six pounds to eleven pounds a-head. As it is impossible to accept such an interpretation, it has been suggested that the text of the original historian has been corrupted, in which case it cannot be adopted as the basis of any calculation. Unsatisfactory, therefore, as it may appear, we must content ourselves with the remark, that the Conqueror wrung as much money from his English subjects as the circumstances in which he was placed

[1] "Inhibemus etiam ne quis Christianum in alienam patriam vendat, et maxime infidelibus." Laws of William the Conqueror, article 41. See also Carta Regis Willelmi, article 15.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, IV. 7.

[3] Burke, Works, X. 393.

[4] Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain, I. 408.

[5] Masères, Historiæ Anglicanæ Selecta Monumenta, p. 258, note *n*.

would permit, and that, as he found them industrious and wealthy, his revenues must have been very considerable.

William, whose mints were scattered over nearly the whole kingdom, struck, during his reign, a variety of coins—the mark, in gold and silver, the shilling, the penny, the half-penny, the farthing, and the mite, of which the penny only has come down to our times. In weight, fineness, and type, William's pennies resembled those of king Harold, and the standard remained unaltered during the greater part of his reign.[1]

[1] Ruding, Coinage of Great Britain, I. 406.

THE END.

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